



KQ-040-305





Spurn Head

Gt Grimsby

Barnetby-le-Wold

Brigg

Ch: X

Gainsborough

Morton
Stow

Market
Rasen

Louth

Ch: X
Lincoln

Saxilby Br.

Wragby

Mablethorpe
Sutton-on-Sea

Bardney

Horncastle

Ch: IX

Spilsby

Skegness

Potter
Hanworth

Woodhall Spa.

Barnston

Ch: X

Newark-on-Trent

Tattershall

Stickney

Wainfleet

Digby

Ch: IX

Steaforth

Boston

Ch: IX

Ch: IX

Grantham

Swineshead

Algar Kirk

Gt Ponton

Pinchbeck

Ch: IX Holbeach

Corby

Bourne

Spalding

Long Sutton

EXPLANATION

The Roman numerals indicate the chapters in which the districts indicated are dealt with

—○— Indicates a railway station

Deeping
St James

Ch: VIII

Peterborough

Ch: VIII

Castor

Whittlesea

Wisbeach

March

Ch: VII



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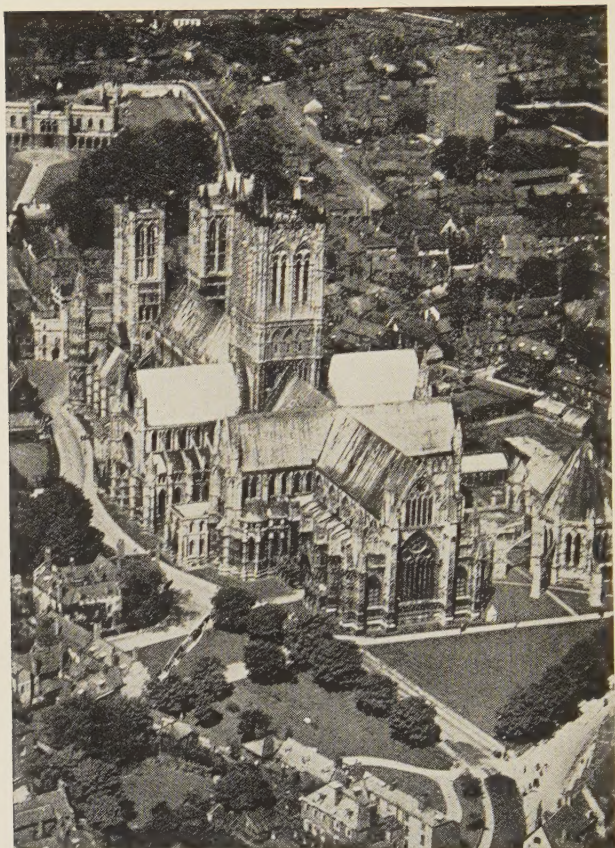
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THROUGH THE CHILTERNS
TO THE FENS



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LINCOLN CATHEDRAL FROM ABOVE

Viewed from the east and showing the double transepts, the Lady Chapel and (on right) the Chapter-House.

THROUGH THE CHILTERN TO THE FENS

BY
GORDON HOME



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PREFACE

THERE is a strip of England wherein lie strong contrasts of scenery—downland and wooded hill-tops, with steepish valleys in between, and beyond them great stretches of fenlands, drained by brimming rivers and dykes. It is a piece of country in no way lacking in pleasing landscapes; wherever inclination directs one's steps there are places associated with great names in English history, and important events were enacted in many of its towns and villages. The architectural adornment of its hills, as well as its levels, is remarkable, four of England's greatest cathedrals standing within their limits. Besides this, there are abbeys of great interest, churches possessing much personal as well as architectural interest and beauty, castles, great manor houses, colleges, unique bridges, besides endless charm in the way of old-world villages and water-mills.

All this is to be found between the Thames and the Trent, a section of England including the counties of Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire. No single book, apart from a general guide to England, has ever attempted to describe what are the chief attractions to draw one to these parts of the country, although it is true that Mr. C. G. Harper's

delightful volume, *The Great North Road*, traverses by means of the famous arterial way a considerable part of it.

Here an effort has been made to compress into small space and to give in readable form a clue to what should draw the lover of the English countryside into these counties. There is, naturally, no attempt to be exhaustive: everyone who cares to visit the places described will discover a dozen other good things in each locality. This gives to all the pleasing sense of discovery, for which opportunities I can only trust that my readers will feel a sense of appreciation.

For those who go afoot and rely on railways for the long distances, the stations are shown in italics, as in the previous volumes of this series.

GORDON HOME.

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By GORDON HOME

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THROUGH THE CHILTERN TO THE FENS

CHAPTER I

THROUGH THE BY-WAYS OF THE CHILTERN HILLS

To live in England and not to know her uplands might be compared to studying English landscape art and missing out Constable and Girtin. Consider any of the groups and chains of hills from Sussex to Cumberland, and as one's mind pictures velvety downland and fir coppice, solemnly massive beech woods crowning near horizons of softly-swelling oolite, or the more northern limestone heights where the purple heather contrasts with grey scarps, is it possible not to feel a hunger for all the great and lovely things which they offer?

I have seen the precipitous flank of Box Hill turned into a wondrous symphony of dull golden hues under the dying rays of a winter sun; I have galloped wildly over the Sussex Downs with the glorious salt-laden breeze from the Channel exciting both horse and rider; I have roamed the Cotswolds when spring was flooding up their slopes; and I have explored the loneliest crests of northern fells;

2 BY-WAYS OF THE CHILTERNs

and I rejoice and give thanks to "whatever gods may be" that England owns these wonderlands of unspoiled grandeur and sweet solitude.

There is, too, a wideness of choice among the hills of England which gives everyone his opportunity to experience the delights of the upland breeze, and even an over-worked toiler in the heart of London, who can find a brief interval in which to slip the collar and escape, has the beautiful Chilterns almost at his door. It is with this pleasant region of chalk hills stretching from the Thames in a north-easterly direction to the low country of the Ouse and the Cam that this opening chapter is concerned, with smiling valleys and wooded ridges, with the sequestered villages and quaint little towns scattered among the hills as they become more markedly part of a definite group of highlands, until they end on their north-western face in bold and almost precipitous slopes.

If one come towards the Chilterns from Oxford, or further north, the hills present themselves in their most impressive and spectacular manner, rising to heights of over eight hundred feet, but the majority find themselves among their folds without any marked change from the lower undulating land on the Middlesex borders, and as this is the more usual approach, it will be followed in these pages.

Gerrard's Cross is a pleasant spot which not many years ago was as sequestered as many of the remoter corners of Essex, but it has since then become one of the places on the skirts of the

CROMWELL FLINGS A CUSHION 3

Chilterns where the rural aspect has given way to that which might be termed suburban, were not that adjective too unappetising for a place set in such charming surroundings.

A little to the west, in something of an amphitheatre of hills crowned with woods and coppices, the wanderer finds himself on the confines of Bulstrode Park, whose associations with the family of Bulstrode go back many centuries and are full of interest. Of the various members of the family who have risen above the commonplace, Sir Bulstrode Whitelock, M.P., who was Keeper of the Great Seal under the Commonwealth, is the most notable. He appears to have been as dull in his manner as in his style in writing. Carlyle calls him "heavy Bulstrode," but is amazed on one occasion at what he calls his "friskiness" in transcribing a Scottish document in good dialect. Cromwell once brought a boring interview with the great and dull man to an unexpected end by flinging a cushion at his head and bolting from the room. The property later came into the hands of the notorious Judge Jeffreys, and from his son-in-law was bought by William Bentinck, Page of Honour to William, Prince of Orange, and later Earl of Portland and founder of the family which bears the weight of a dukedom to this day. It was as late as 1862 that the present house—the fourth on the site—was built by the Duke of Somerset.

About four miles to the south is Stoke Poges, where the sequestered old church, typical of all that is redolent of the sterling qualities of English

4 BY-WAYS OF THE CHILTERNs

life, still stands as it was known to the author of the historic *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. There are many more strikingly picturesque churchyards than that of Stoke Poges, but the fact that this average example of the simple



STOKE POGES CHURCH BY MOONLIGHT

It was this simple country churchyard which inspired Thomas Gray to write his famous *Elegy*.

“God’s acre” inspired Thomas Gray to write that mellow poem, is sufficient to give the place an attraction hard to resist. Who would care to pass without seeing the yew, the ivied tower, the rugged elms and the heaving turf, known and loved by Gray—the inspiration of the lines which Wolfe was found reading shortly before his

attack on the precipices of Quebec? The changes are slight since the year 1742, when the poet wrote:

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.

His grave, near the eastern end of the church, is simple and austere. It is a brick table-tomb covered with a plain stone slab, and strangely enough, it bears no inscription to record the fact that Gray was buried there. One reads only the lines which he wrote when his mother died and was laid to rest here:

Beside her friend and sister here sleep the remains of Dorothy Gray, widow, the careful tender mother of many children, one of whom alone had the misfortune to survive her. She died March 11, 1753, aged 72.

If restoration has changed the interior of the church since the days of the poet, it has not robbed it of all interest, for nave, chancel, and the ivy-mantled tower are Norman and Early English, and there are brasses to Sir William Moleyns (1425) and his wife, and also to Edward Hampdyn and his wife, of the Elizabethan period.

To the north of Gerrard's Cross station are the two pleasantly-named villages of Chalfont St. Peter and Chalfont St. Giles. At the first, the church was rebuilt a century or more ago, and would not be interesting save for the monumental brasses which it preserves. The most interesting is that to William Whappelode (in plate armour) and his wife Margery, wearing the quaint horned head-dress and veil of

6 BY-WAYS OF THE CHILTERN

the period. This man held the important post of Steward to Cardinal Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, who was the second son of John of Gaunt, and half-brother of Henry IV. (1399-1413).

Chalfont St. Giles has preserved its mediæval church, and with its green and duck pond and a charming arrangement of xvith and xviiith century cottages, above whose time-worn roofs appears the church tower, is typical of the prettiest of Buckinghamshire villages. There is a passage through some timber-framed cottages which forms an unusual type of lych-gate to the churchyard. The earliest portions of the church are Norman, but the successive periods of Gothic are mainly visible. There are interesting monuments with effigies, including that of Thomas Fletewoode, Lord of "The Vache," Treasurer of the Mint and Knight of Parliament for Buckinghamshire. He is shown kneeling in armour, and with him, also kneeling, are his two wives and his children.

At the southern end of the village, or the farthest from the green, is a picturesque ruddy-brown cottage of the xviiith century, one side of which faces a sunny little garden, wherein flowers bloom in masses under the partial shade of old fruit trees. It was to this charming little house that John Milton came in 1665 to avoid the Great Plague in London. He had only lately finished *Paradise Lost*, and while at Chalfont St. Giles lent a copy of the MS. to his friend, Thomas Ellwood, the Quaker. When he returned it, Ellwood suggested that the poet might proceed to write *Paradise Regained*. Although Milton made

no reply, he "sat some time in a muse," and then, says his friend, "broke off that discourse, and fell upon another subject." There is little doubt that this suggestion made in the old Buckinghamshire cottage gave birth to the second great poem, for when Ellwood was in London, after Milton and



MILTON'S COTTAGE AT CHALFONT ST. GILES

It is the only house occupied by the poet which is still standing.

his family had returned to Bunhill Fields, he showed him the new work, and "in a pleasant tone" said to his friend, "This is owing to you, for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which before I had not thought of." It is not known whether any part of the later poem was written at Chalfont, but it is possible to picture the family life, of which the blind poet was

8 BY-WAYS OF THE CHILTERNS

the centre, for with him was Elizabeth, his devoted third wife, then only twenty-seven years of age, and his three troublesome and selfish young daughters, the eldest of whom was in her twentieth year.

No other house occupied by Milton is standing to-day, and it is, therefore, a matter for no small satisfaction that it was in 1887 purchased as a national possession, Queen Victoria heading the subscription list.

Not much more than a long mile to the south of Chalfont St. Giles there is a half-forgotten corner, heavily shaded by trees, where one finds by the roadside a plain brown-tiled house, little more than a simple oblong, with small-paned windows furnished with shutters. This is Jordans, which became the meeting-house of the Society of Friends in this neighbourhood during the xviiith century, and has long been famous as the burial-place of William Penn, the founder of the new colony, which Charles II. insisted should be called Pennsylvania. The existing meeting-house was built in 1688, some seventeen years after the Jordans property was bought as a burial-place for the Friends in the district. With its red brick floor, whitewashed walls and plain panelled wainscot, the interior retains all the simplicity which the Quakers adhered to.

Eleven headstones mark the graves of some of the best known of the Friends who were laid to rest in the little burial-ground. William Penn was placed in the same grave as Hannah, his second wife. Close by is the resting-place of Mary Pen-

ington, who married Isaac, the son of Sir Isaac Penington, who was one of the Commissioners for the trial of Charles I., although he did not sign the death warrant. Here also lie Thomas Ellwood and his wife, and Joseph Rule, who always wore white, and was, therefore, known as "the white



THE MEETING-HOUSE OF JORDANS

It was built in 1688, and among the graves on the left is the resting-place of William Penn.

Quaker," and on the day of whose funeral the ground was whitened by snow.

Beaconsfield. Spread out along the road to Oxford the old-fashioned village of Beaconsfield has a singularly attractive appearance, the time-worn brick of its houses being disturbed by very few modern intrusions. Almost as though anticipating the development of motor traffic, the

10 BY-WAYS OF THE CHILTERNS

street is one of the widest to be found in the county, thus making it possible for the inhabitants to leave their houses without imminent peril to life, which is common to all those places with narrow streets which have the bad luck to be upon great motor-ways.

At the cross-roads at a central part of the village stands the church, whose massive pinnacled tower is scarcely tall enough for its bulk. The outstanding interest of the interior is the tablet to the memory of Edmund Burke, who was one of the noblest and most disinterested statesmen of his age. He was never tested by holding supreme responsibility, and he appears to have lacked that commanding quality of personality which generally brings with it an eloquence which is entirely successful. But his understanding of political philosophy in relation to the detailed work of practical politics was pre-eminent. He found his temper difficult to control when confronted by the jobbery and widespread corruption in the various departments of the Government, and on one occasion became so exasperated by the inaccurate naval returns which were being foisted upon the House of Commons that he sternly declared that they were a fabrication, accused the Secretary of the Admiralty of mendacity, and flung the estimates at his head.

It was in 1769 that Burke purchased an estate at Beaconsfield. It consisted of some 620 acres, and cost £22,000, and as he was supposed at the time to be a penniless man, endless questions were asked as to how he could raise such a sum. Fortunately there is documentary evidence to show that



THE BROAD STREET OF BEACONSFIELD

In the church is buried Edmund Burke, and an obelisk in the churchyard marks the grave of Waller the poet.

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there were no grounds for suspicions as to his financial affairs, the great statesman having come into certain property which he realised. The mortgage which he raised in order to complete the purchase was still unpaid when he died. He was not a spendthrift, but he spent freely, and year by year his affairs became more complicated by debts, for he befriended everybody in distress, from budding poets, such as Crabbe, to the country folk round about his estate. When he died in 1797 Fox proposed a public funeral and burial in Westminster Abbey, but Burke's desire for a private funeral was respected, and this fine type of British statesman lies in the quiet little Buckinghamshire church.

In the churchyard is the tomb, conspicuous with an obelisk, of Edmund Waller, the poet, who was a contemporary and first cousin of John Hampden. His birthplace, Coleshill, near Amersham, was sold by his father when Edmund was still a child, and the family then came to Beaconsfield. He died at Hall Barn in 1687.

Nearly four hundred acres of what formed originally part of a great area of forest land in Buckinghamshire was, in 1883, taken over by the Corporation of the City of London as a national park. This exceedingly beautiful piece of forest is known as Burnham Beeches, from the predominance of those graceful trees, and, owing to the irregular conformation of the ground, there are few belts of forest land in the country giving more diversified views. Thomas Gray wrote of it as "this little chaos of mountain and pre-

cipices." The distance from Beaconsfield station is about three miles, and it is approximately the same by the less-frequented road from Gerrard's Cross.

Two and a half miles to the north-west is the village of Penn, with its picturesque church, presenting a quaint array of gables on the southern side. As far back as the XIIIth century there were Penns at this place. They owned the manorial rights by the end of the XVth century. In the church can be seen various brasses to the Penn family, the earliest, those to John Penn and his wife Ursula, dating from 1597. There is another brass to William Penn of Penn (1638), who should not be in any way confused with the founder of Pennsylvania, nor with the Admiral, Sir William Penn, his father, who was a contemporary and friend of Pepys, and lies buried in St. Mary Redcliffe Church at Bristol. While the lord of the manor of Penn was living quietly and unobtrusively at his country seat, his neighbour of Stoke Poges was in the very vortex of public affairs, and yet the two branches of the family would appear to have had no intercourse or association whatever. When the male line of the Penns of Penn died out, the heiress married into the Curzon family, whose monuments are also to be seen in the church.

The village stands high on the southern margin of the Chilterns, and commands a wide view across a portion of the Thames Valley, including Windsor Castle as its most conspicuous feature. A lane leading southwards joins the main road to High

14 BY-WAYS OF THE CHILTERNs

Wycombe after a mile and a half, and if this be followed for a mile towards Beaconsfield, a turning to the right will be found which skirts the foot of a spur of the hills, and brings one through charming country to Bourne End, where one is in close proximity to that exquisite stretch of river scenery known as Cliveden Reach.

High Wycombe. In a central position in the southernmost of the half-dozen valleys which penetrate the Chilterns, is busy High Wycombe. Fortunately it is still only a small town, and its chief industry, that of the manufacture of Windsor chairs and furniture, has not succeeded in spoiling its picturesqueness. The old and more pleasing name was Chipping Wycombe, and its original church of All Hallows was dedicated by St. Wulstan as long ago as 1070. This Romanesque building was replaced late in the XIIIth century, and subsequent reconstruction has turned the church very largely into one of Perpendicular date.

In the Romano-British period there was a villa close to High Wycombe, which was brought to light about two centuries ago. It was of the courtyard type, and had tessellated pavements and painted walls, and the evidence of coins indicates that it was occupied during the middle of the IInd century.

The conspicuous feature of the main street of High Wycombe is the Town Hall, built in 1757; one of those always-attractive Georgian structures of red brick built upon an arcaded lower floor, and surmounted by a well-designed lantern.

DISRAELI ADDRESSES A CROWD 15

There is very little change in the appearance of this part of the street since the stirring days when Disraeli was candidate for High Wycombe in Parliament, and the *Red Lion* Hotel still preserves its formidable beast which looked out on the street when he addressed a crowd during one of his early election campaigns. "Feeling it was the crisis," he wrote in a letter, "I jumped upon the portico of the *Red Lion*, and gave it them for an hour and a quarter. I can give you no idea of the effect; it made them all mad."

Cobbett, in his *Rural Rides*, wrote, "Wycombe is one of those famous things called boroughs, and thirty-four votes in this borough send Sir John Dashwood and Sir Thomas Baring to the 'Collective Wisdom.'"

Disraeli's associations with High Wycombe began in 1832, when he was unsuccessful candidate for the place as a Tory, and his two subsequent attempts, one in the same year, and the third in 1834, were equally unsuccessful. It was during his first campaign that Disraeli canvassed Mr. Norris, the then owner of Hughenden. His reception, however, was not at all cordial, the candidate being desired to get out of the house as quickly as possible, the door being slammed in his face. About twelve years afterwards, Hughenden Manor House was bought by Disraeli, and it remained his home until his death. He was buried in the village churchyard, and a memorial was placed on the walls of the church by Queen Victoria. In the centre is a medallion portrait, above are his arms, and below is the inscription, written by the

16 BY-WAYS OF THE CHILTERNs

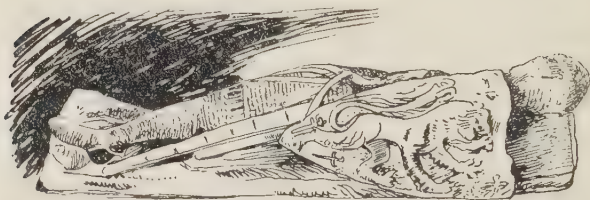
queen herself, the warmth of her feelings revealing itself in every word:

To the dear and honoured memory
of Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield.
This memorial is placed by his
grateful sovereign and friend,
Victoria, R.I.

“Kings love him that speaketh right.”

February 27th, 1882.

The public grief manifested at the death of Lord Beaconsfield was remarkable, and the anniversary has been kept ever since by the wearing of prim-roses, which were believed to be his favourite flower, although there is, I believe, some doubt on this point. Beside the monument are placed Beaconsfield's banner and insignia of the Order of the Garter.



A CROSS-LEGGED EFFIGY OF A KNIGHT IN HUGHENDEN CHURCH

Another interesting feature of the church is a cross-legged effigy of a knight in chain mail, which is generally considered to represent a son of Simon de Montfort.

The stately cedars which adorn Hughenden

Manor were Beaconsfield's favourite trees; some of them were planted by King Edward VII.

West Wycombe. Three short miles up the valley of the Wye, where the grassy hill-slopes descend upon it with increasing steepness, is West Wycombe, a charming road-side village in typical Chiltern scenery. In all directions there are foot-paths and by-ways leading into pleasant unsophisticated country. About five miles to the west the Rambler finds himself on the steepest face of the Chilterns, overlooking the undulating plain, in the heart of which lies the greatest university city of England.

West Wycombe House, just to the south of the village, was built by the eccentric Sir Francis Dashwood, who became Lord le Despenser. He also built the curious church which stands on the grass-grown slope above the village. This structure is little more than a large room with a flat ceiling, while the fittings are ordinary mahogany furniture of domestic type. On the church tower is a curious ball, the interior of which was sufficiently spacious to enable le Despenser to hold meetings with a dozen of his friends at a time.

It was down at Medmenham Abbey, on the Thames above Marlow, that this dilettante peer held gatherings of the convivial club, which he founded, and with which he associated his order of St. Francis. The club became popularly known as the "Hell-fire Club," and Horace Walpole stated that the nominal qualification for membership was having visited Italy, but that the real one was having been drunk. No doubt the

18 BY-WAYS OF THE CHILTERN

stories of the proceedings of the club at Medmenham Abbey were exaggerated, popular gossip turning them into orgies, with perhaps little real justification.

The main road to Princes Risborough passes through a most pleasantly-wooded valley, in which the village of Bradenham nestles among steep beech-grown ascents, the ground rising to the north to some 600 feet above sea level. The Manor House of the village was for some nineteen years the home of Isaac Disraeli, the father of Beaconsfield, and in it he died in 1848. Although externally somewhat modern in aspect, the house is Elizabethan in origin and plan, and it contains much Carolian and later work of that century, including panelling and staircases.

The little church of Bradenham, dedicated to St. Botolph, is built of flint rubble, and, apart from its memorial to Isaac Disraeli, is interesting on account of its Norman nave and south door. The very simple character of this doorway has given rise to the suggestion that it may belong to a date preceding the Conquest, but the Historical Monuments Commission places it late in the xith or early in the xiiith century. The lintel has a cable moulding on its under edge, and on the surface is cut a shallow lozenge pattern.

A lane leading towards Great Hampden brings one to Lacey Green, from which extend two well-preserved lengths of Grim's Ditch or Dyke, each about 500 yards in length. The direction is approximately N.N.E., and the width of the great trench is about thirty feet, with a bank rising four feet

above. It is difficult to say with any certainty the purpose for this great dyke; it may be that it was a boundary, separating the Romano-British area from the English invaders at some period between the vth and the viiith centuries, when mediæval England was gradually forming out of the welter of invasion. Another suggested explanation for the existence of Grim's Dyke is the boundary between Essex and Mercia, which may have been in this neighbourhood.

Saunderton. Just to the south-west is the breezy spur of the hills known as Bledlow Ridge; it leads up to the highest portion of the north-western face of the hills.

Princes Risborough has a quaint little feature in its xviiiith-century wooden market-house, raised on oak posts at the central cross-roads. The church, in spite of very much rebuilding, has contrived to save some good features of the Decorated period in its south aisle, otherwise it is not very interesting.

The village of Bledlow stands on the slopes of the Chilterns between the Icknield Way and the highest parts of the ridge. It has a church built of flint rubble, which is mainly of Early English date, including the very solidly-built western tower and the nave arcades, with floriated capitals to the pillars. The tub-shaped font is Norman, and the north and south doors of oak, with strap-hinges, go back probably to 1260, and are therefore coeval with the main portions of the building.

About a mile to the south-west of the village

there is a cross of Greek form cut in the turf on the face of the hill-slope. Another, known as White-leaf Cross, is to be seen near Monks Risborough.



ON THE FACE OF THE CHILTERN

There are no others in the county. Their age is uncertain, and unfortunately the early topographers do not mention them. The Bledlow cross consists of four arms of roughly equal length, each about fifteen feet wide, while that at White-

leaf stands on a pyramidal base and its arms are some twenty feet broad.

At Monks Risborough the church contains an interesting sculptured Norman font, and one of the brasses, showing a priest in mass vestments (probably a rector), dates back to 1431. It is exceptionally well-preserved.

The lane passing the foot of Whiteleaf Cross leads in a meandering fashion to Great Hampden, one of those deliciously out-of-the-way places in which the Chilterns are so rich. No road going very directly to any place comes near the beautiful park, in which stand the church and Great Hampden House — the ancestral home of the Hampdens. So ancient is the family that it is generally accepted that it was established there before the Conquest, and it therefore seems entirely fitting that during the great struggle between royal prerogative and constitutional rights a representative of this essentially English family should come into the arena as a champion of the people.

In 1635 Charles I. went one step further in his arbitrary methods of raising money without parliamentary sanction, and levied Ship-Money not only on seaport towns, but also on the inland counties. For one year it was grumblingly paid, but when, in that following, the demand was repeated, the Hampden then living in this obscure corner of the Chiltern Hundreds came forward as a defender of constitutional rights.

John Hampden was born in 1595, and represented Wendover in the first three Parliaments of Charles I. His refusal to pay the tax which had not

received the sanction of Parliament, and the trial which followed, in which seven out of the twelve judges decided against him, helped to make Hampden a popular hero. There is little doubt that "the massiveness and modesty of his character, his dislike of all pretences in himself and others, his brave contempt of danger and his charitable readiness to shield others as far as possible from the evil consequences of their actions,"¹ gave him a place in the affections of the people which formed the real foundation of the position he secured and never lost.

Having thrown in his lot with the Parliament when civil war was declared, Hampden raised a regiment in Buckinghamshire, and showed himself a gallant and efficient leader. He was destined to meet his death within a few miles of his home. On the 18th June, 1643, he was outnumbered on Chalgrove Field by the forces of Prince Rupert while attempting with a body of volunteer cavalry to check his advance on Oxford, and was desperately wounded in the shoulder. In the midst of the fray he was seen riding out of the fighting-line, bowed in agony over his horse's neck, leaning on his hands. It is now believed that his pistol exploded and shattered his shoulder. Instinctively—or it may be it was the homing instinct of his steed—he turned his face homeward through Thame to Hampden. But in Thame he was lifted dying from his horse and laid in the house of Ezekiel Browne, and there after six days he passed away on the 24th. He was buried in the church

¹ *Dictionary of National Biography.*

of Great Hampden, all the available troops escorting the honoured corpse, singing the ninetieth Psalm on the way to the grave; the forty-third as they departed.

There is no doubt that the great patriot was buried in the church adjoining his house, but no monument marks the spot. He was buried hastily in the midst of war, and since Great Hampden was in such a remote part of the country, his mourners were probably disinclined to leave any trace which might lead to desecration of the "rebel's" body by fanatical Royalists; for the same reason the secret of his coffin was probably kept after the Restoration. The treatment of Cromwell's corpse showed that the victorious Royalists would go to any length of outrage. He may have been buried "in his martial cloak," like Sir John Moore, but since his funeral was a solemn one, it is most probable that the "nameless" coffin found by Lord Nugent may have enclosed his remains.

One looks with interest on the monument to Hampden's first wife, Elizabeth, for the inscription was composed by her husband, who describes her as "to all an eternal pattern of Goodness."

In the house, some parts of which go back to the xivth century, are at least two rooms of Hampden's time—the Hall and the Brick Parlour. In the latter are his helmet and a chalice from which he received the sacrament. In the Hall are portraits of the patriot and his cousin, Oliver Cromwell. There is much more of interest in the house, but not much relating to Hampden.

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The quaint little church at Little Hampden has a very curious timber-framed porch of two storeys, probably of the xvth century, when the chancel was added to the Norman nave. In 1907 a very interesting series of paintings was brought to light on the walls of the nave, one series painted



LITTLE HAMPDEN CHURCH

It has a Norman nave and a very curious timber-framed porch.

over the other, the earliest dating back to the xiiith century.

Kimble. Great and Little Kimble are respectively on the Upper and Lower Icknield Ways, but in each instance the church is on the higher road. The name Kimble is of much interest on account of its being quite certainly associated with that of Cunobelin or Cymbeline, the British king whose overlordship extended throughout

southern and south-eastern Britain, and who died two years before the Emperor Claudius invaded his territory in A.D. 43. In a document dated 903 Kimble appears as *Cunobelingas*, and nearly two centuries later Domesday Book gives the name as *Chenebelle*. An isolated hill above the village, still retaining old earthworks of the mount and bailey type, now bears the name of "Cymbeline's Mount," while a prehistoric fortress on Pulpit Hill to the south-east is perhaps of Neolithic origin, but it may quite well have been useful in Cunobelin's time.

In the hollow between these forts and the windswept downland to the east is Chequers Court, set in a spacious and beautiful park whose trees add very greatly to its perennial charm. Early in the present century the property was acquired by Lord Lee of Fareham—then Mr. A. H. Lee—who, after having extensively restored the xvith-century house, presented it to the nation as a country residence for the Prime Minister of England. Thus it has come about that this stately Tudor house, already possessed of associations with the family of Oliver Cromwell, has rapidly gathered others from the many informal meetings and conversations of statesmen which have taken place there during and since the Great European War. The year 1924 saw the old mansion in the occupation of the first Labour Prime Minister.

The house is quadrangular in plan, and the interior is rich in oak panelling. One of the oak-lined rooms is named after Cromwell, from its having formerly contained contemporary portraits



CYMBELINE'S MOUNT

Seen from the high downland above, with the park of Chequers on the left.

of the Protector and his family, as well as a death mask and two of his swords.

The Protector had no personal connection with Chequers, but the relics were collected there by Colonel Russell, Cromwell's great-grandson through his daughter Frances' second marriage with Sir John Russell of Chippenham. The story of her first marriage is both a pretty and a pathetic one. Frances Cromwell was the Protector's youngest daughter, and her hand was sought in marriage by many suitors. It seems not at all impossible that Charles II. was ready to marry either Frances ("Franke") or her sister Mary as the price of his recognition by Cromwell. As a matter of fact both girls, being handsome and amiable, were literally persecuted by lovers or quasi-lovers. Frances Cromwell solved the problem by falling in love with the Hon. Robert Rich, grandson of the Earl of Warwick. He was a delicate youth of little over twenty, and Frances was barely nineteen. There was considerable opposition from Cromwell's family, as Mary Cromwell truthfully tells her brother Henry. Interested persons informed the Protector that poor young Rich was an idle, vicious boy; but "Franke" insisted on ascertaining the truth, and convinced the doubters that her lover was slandered. Then, says Mary, "she engaged me and all the friends she had, who truly were very few," to break the news to her father. Cromwell seems not to have been very willing, chiefly on account of the bad character of Robert Rich's father, Lord Rich, and partly, no doubt, owing to Robert's bad health. But in the end he

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gave a qualified assent. However, there was still a long negotiation between the Protector and Lord Warwick; and Lord Rich evidently did his best to spoil their plans. "If Cromwell gave way," wrote Mary, "it would show that he was made a fool on by my Lord Rich." The conclusion is delightful: "which the truth is, how it should be, I can't understand, nor very few else." However, in the end the tangle was straightened out, and "Franke" was duly married to Robert Rich in December 1657; but two months later she was a widow! Eight years afterwards she married again, her second husband being Sir John Russell of Chippenham, whose grandson collected the relics referred to above.

From the high ground above Chequers a very wide expanse of country is spread out before one's gaze. The northern corner of Buckinghamshire melts into the adjoining county of Oxford, a patchwork of green pasture and (in midsummer) of tawny cornland, broken by belts of woodland. The distant landscape takes to itself an increasingly exquisite tint of blue as it nears the soft horizon, and as one draws into the lungs the sweetest and purest of English air one is fain to ask, Does any land in the wide world possess landscapes so garden-like and altogether satisfying as those of southern England?

Treading the carpet-like turf, the wanderer who has decided with wisdom to explore the Chilterns afoot can betake himself along the high ground in a north-easterly direction, enjoying this wonderful view until he is within a quarter of a mile of the charming old town of Wendover.

Wendover. The street is very broad, and many pleasant and cosy-looking cottages give to the place that atmosphere of shy welcome one learns



WENDOVER CHURCH

to appreciate in villages which are unspoiled. Wendover struck John Leland as pleasing when he compiled his itinerary in the reign of Henry VIII. He calls it a "pretty Through-Fayre Towne havinge 2 Streets well builded with Tymbre."

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But he writes of the way to Aylesbury as "taedious and ill to passe." Oddly enough, R. L. Stevenson wrote unkindly of it in 1875 as a straggling, purposeless sort of place.

In a charming situation surrounded by trees stands the church, which is mainly of the xivth century. Among the memorials is a brass to William Bradshawe and Alice his wife, dated 1537. They are represented with their nine children, to whom are attached the names of twenty-three grandchildren.

The manor of Wendover was for long owned by the family of Hampden, and in 1623 John Hampden, the famous leader of the Constitutional party, was M.P. for the town. Sir Richard Steele, Addison's friend and literary colleague, was M.P. in 1722. Edmund Burke sat for the town 1765-74. Dean Colet, one of the founders of the Renaissance in England, Henry VIII.'s favourite preacher, may perhaps have been born here. Certainly his family was associated with the place. With two famous Englishmen of mediæval times Wendover is certainly associated—Richard of Wendover, Bishop of Rochester in the reign of Henry III., and the chronicler, Roger of Wendover, one of the authorities, by the way, for the story of Lady Godiva of Coventry.

Great Missenden. Wendover actually stands in the main pass in the highest portion of the Chilterns, and when one has crossed the watershed, the long and narrow valley in which stand Great Missenden and Amersham extends towards the south-east, hanging beech woods crowning the

hill-slopes, and the best types of the scenery of the Chiltern Hundreds greeting one through the whole length of the vale.

The name Missenden suggests the existence of much forest land in Saxon days, when the village was founded. In 1133 one William de Missenden became the founder of a Benedictine abbey at this remote place. It was probably never of any great consequence in the way of worldly wealth, and whatever the buildings may have been at the time of the Dissolution, they have been so completely plundered that very little remains to be seen to-day, the church itself having been entirely razed to the ground. To the south of it stood the cloisters, upon which stands the present house of Missenden Abbey, about a furlong to the west of the parish church. Incorporated into the building are various walls and some of the roofs of the domestic portions of the abbey. The lower storey of the east wing had apparently been the undercroft of the dormitory, of which the xvth-century roof is still to be seen in the upper storey.

The church is situated on steep sloping ground, and was built late in the Decorated period, with various alterations made subsequently. There are two or three brasses, one of them to John Arwardby and his wife, "daughter of Bernard de Mussenden, patron of this abbey of Mussenden," 1436.

Of Great Missenden Castle, which is about two-thirds of a mile to the south-east of the church, there are considerable ditches and ramparts, enclosing an area of about one and a half acres.

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In the "Buckingham Arms" a very curious panel of carved oak was lately brought to light, bearing the date 1631. It shows two men dancing among flames, their hands clasped. In their free hands they severally hold a tankard and what may be intended for bread.

Little Missenden church has a late xiiith-century font, richly sculptured, and a few brasses of the xviiith century, but restoration has deprived the



A VERY CURIOUS CARVED OAK PANEL, DISCOVERED IN THE
"BUCKINGHAM ARMS" AT GREAT MISSENDEN

building of much of its interest, although the Norman work of the nave is good.

The Misbourne, which has been an inconspicuous stream until now, is dammed into a charming lake in the park of Shardeloes, which extends high up on the slopes of the hill, and was laid out by the landscape gardener Richmond. The house designed by Adam replaces one of the Tudor times which was visited by Queen Elizabeth. About the period of the Restoration the property came into the hands of Sir William Drake, a baronet who represented Amersham in Parliament,

and monuments of whose family are to be found in Amersham church.

Amersham. This is one of those old red-brick towns of Buckinghamshire made picturesque by the possession of a xviiith-century town hall, built by the Sir William Drake just referred to. It is designed much on the same lines as the market-house at High Wycombe, and bears its date, 1682, and the Drake monogram on a stone tablet at the west end. The almshouses were also endowed and built in 1657 by Sir William Drake, and are quite an ornament to the little town, which preserves a considerable number of xviiith-century inns and houses. Here and there on either side of the quaint old street there are survivals of much earlier times, some of the houses possessing xvth-century features.

In a turning close to the market-house stands the church, mainly of xiiith-century date, with additions made in the Decorated period. The tower was added about 1480, and the chapel erected by the Drake family was a xviiith-century addition. A number of brasses in the chancel of the xvth and xvth centuries are of interest, and the monuments in the Drake Chapel add to the attraction of the building. There is a story based on uncertain authority that John Knox preached in Amersham church in the year 1553 when on a mission to Edward VI., and Richard Baxter came here in order to discuss matters of religion with "certain giddy minds from Chesham." These appear to have been Anabaptist soldiers belonging to the Parliamentary army.

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In the reign of Mary, when religious persecution was at its height, a martyrdom occurred in this quiet little place which must have filled with horror the minds of all but the most bigoted, for an unfortunate Protestant named William Tyllsworth was burned to death at the stake, his daughter having been compelled to light the pyre.



A FOOTPATH NEAR AMERSHAM IN EARLY SPRING

Chalfont and Latimer. A mile or more to the east of this station, in an exquisitely lovely hollow, is the little village of Chenies. It is on the southern side of the valley of the little river Chess, two or three miles from that of the Misbourne. Although the situation has become much less remote than a generation ago, Chenies remains almost idyllically rural, and Froude's description of the cottages, the church and the mansion as "a piece

CHENIES CHURCH & ITS TOMBS 35

of ancient England artificially preserved from the intrusion of modern ways" is to a great extent true to-day. Scattered round the sloping green, and shaded by tall trees, are a few simple cottages, the smoke from whose chimneys rises blue against the woods above.

The church was rebuilt in Perpendicular times and only the font of the original church remains. This is one of the "Aylesbury"¹ type of late XIIIth-century date. Quite apart, however, from its architectural features, Chenies church is famous as the place of sepulture of the Russells. In the north chapel, where members of this great family have been laid to rest since 1556, one finds, as Horace Walpole put it, "the house of Russell robed in alabaster."

It was the John Lord Russell, an intimate friend of Henry VIII., and a gainer of enormous financial advantage from the dissolution of the monasteries, who rebuilt the old manor-house of the Sapcotes, and thus established the connection between the Russells and Chenies. He was created the first Earl of Bedford in the same reign, and it was his widow, Anne Countess of Bedford, who built, in accordance with her husband's will, the Tudor chapel, in which the splendid array of table-tombs and wall monuments tells of the long-sustained opulence of one of England's greatest families. One of the more recent tombs is that of Lord John Russell, who was chiefly responsible for the first Reform Bill of 1832. The panelled marble sides of the monuments, each

¹ See page 45.

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bearing well-sculptured recumbent effigies, are reflected in the polished black-and-white chequering of the floor, also of marble, while above hang the banners of those who were Knights of the Garter. The only chapels to compare with this are at Arundel, wherein lie the Dukes of Norfolk, and at Warwick, where the earls of that name have been laid to rest for several centuries past.

In the west of the church is the red-brick manor-house rebuilt in 1530 by John Lord Russell. The building has particularly fine chimney stacks and gables, with crow-stepping. It is now a farm-house and a church-room.

Chesham. Curiously situated at the head of the valley of the stream known as the Chess, Chesham is in the centre of the Chiltern Hundreds, and it stands just where five valleys converge like the fingers of a hand. Owing to this the little town is periodically subjected to sudden floods. If an exceptionally heavy fall of rain take place on the high ground, the waters sweep down the vales, and uniting their forces, discharge themselves upon Chesham. These floods sometimes come with such suddenness that it is necessary to take to one's heels, or be caught in water up to the knees or over.

In Chesham Park stands the church, which has an early Perpendicular chancel with nave and aisles of the XIIIth century. In the churchyard one may discover a cross put up to the memory of Thomas Harding, a Protestant martyr who, according to Foxe, was burnt in 1532. Chesham was the abode in the XVIIth century of Roger Crab, a real "Mad Hatter," for he kept a hatter's



A BEND ON THE RIVER CHESS



THE WISTARIA-CLAD INN OF DENHAM
One of the prettiest villages of Buckinghamshire.

shop at Chesham after leaving Fairfax's "New Model" Army. His brain was disordered by a wound on the head during the Great Civil War, and he developed undoubted signs of insanity. He wrote some crazy pamphlets, and ultimately, after much tribulation, died in 1680.

Houses of some picturesqueness survive in the little town, but modern influences are changing its aspect, giving a certain rawness in places.

There are pleasant walks down the little valley watered by the Chess between Chesham and Chenies until the open country is reached at

Rickmansworth. Here the old village has grown somewhat in recent years, but is still picturesque with time-worn houses on either side of the old streets. It has many advantages as a place from which to begin or to bring to an end an exploration of the Chilterns.

Denham is another of the villages on the borders of the Chilterns which has only to be seen to be loved, and both its convenient position and the possession of a railway station give it importance as a starting place for a ramble in pleasant rural scenery. Few villages near London are so unspoiled, and lovers of the picturesque will pray that the old-world charm of the place may be spared indefinitely.

CHAPTER II

BELOW THE WESTERN FACE OF THE HILLS

Stoke Mandeville. Across the level green meadowland, beneath the face of the Chiltern Hills, runs the lower course of the Icknield Way, one of the most well-marked of the old British roads. There are no indications that this ancient trackway was ever taken into the Roman system of roads. Its somewhat deviating course follows a direction roughly from south-west to north-east and passing through the very centre of Buckinghamshire leads away into the country of the Iceni. It passes within a mile of Stoke Mandeville village, and about the same distance from Wendover, which is on the upper course of the ancient thoroughfare, a route used, no doubt, when the lower ground was impassable in winter.

There is a new church in the centre of Stoke Mandeville village which was built in 1886, and, although its exterior is unappetising, it contains a good many features of interest taken from the old church which now stands roofless and abandoned in a broad sweep of meadowland between the village and the steep face of the hills. The xvth-century panelled font is well designed, and is interesting on account of its having a representation on one of the eight sides of the bowl of a chrismatory with a gabled lid, which held

the consecrated oils used for baptism. In the nave the monument to the four children of Edmund Brudenell shows alabaster effigies of two infants and a girl of about twelve years old in Elizabethan costume; there is no date, but the inscription includes these lines:

Cruell death by mortall blades
Hath slain foure of my tender babes.
Whereof Mary, Thomas and Dorothee
Within this place ther bodies lye.

My sweet Doll at ev'ning dyed.
Oh, Dorothee my blessed childe
Which lovingly lyved and dyed mylde.

What was the cause of the tragedy these pathetic lines only half reveal no one can tell, for it seems difficult to imagine the butchering of four children in the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, when peace and prosperity reigned throughout the realm. The tradition that the children were killed by Parliamentary soldiers during the Great Civil War is obviously far from the truth on account of the costume in which the girl is attired.

A very pleasant footpath past thatched cottages and beneath the shade of tall trees leads towards the boldly-outlined hills, where the old church can be seen half hidden in foliage. The building was much damaged, it is said, during the Civil War, and although patched up was never thoroughly restored. The Norman chancel arch, a very simple affair without mouldings, remains undamaged, but the wall is cracked from top to bottom.



THE RUINED CHURCH

In the distance appears the

Aylesbury is now a fairly large town, but it has not yet grown sufficiently to destroy the rural character of its immediate surroundings. It is the county town of Buckinghamshire, and stands on the Roman Akeman Street, which continued to a point near Tring where it met the Icknield Way, and from thence took a less clearly-indicated course directed towards Verulamium (St. Albans).

In a prominent place in the Market Place one is reminded of the Great Civil War by a good statue to John Hampden. At the beginning of hostilities the town was represented by two Royalists, Sir John Peckington and Mr. Ralph Verney, the son of Charles I.'s standard-bearer. They were not allowed to sit in the Long Parlia-



STOKE MANDEVILLE
Deep face of the Chiltern Hills.

ment, their places being taken by Thomas Scott, an attorney, and Simon Mayne, of Dinton Hall, both of whom signed the death-warrant of Charles I. At the Restoration, when the series of executions of the regicides took place which so sickened Samuel Pepys, Scott suffered the death penalty, and Mayne died in the Tower. There was yet another regicide connected with Aylesbury: this was Colonel Richard Ingoldsby, who succeeded in escaping death by insisting that he was forced by Cromwell to sign the king's death-warrant. For some reason Charles II. believed his statement, and later on conferred a baronetcy upon him.

The "George Hotel" was frequented by Beaconsfield, and in 1874 he made a speech from a window

in which he attacked Gladstone on the question of a treaty which secured the freedom of the Straits of Malacca for the China trade. Gladstone or Horace Lloyd replied in a rhyme:

The farmers of Aylesbury gathered to dine,
And they ate their prime beef, and they drank their old
 wine,
With the wine there was beer, with the beer there was
 bacca,
The liquors went round, and the banquet was crowned
With some thundering news from the Straits of Malacca.

That such doggerel should have come from the pen of Gladstone seems more than unlikely.

Almost hidden from sight in a narrow turning leading off the Market Place is the "Old King's Head" inn. Part of it dates from about 1444, and its hall is a very good example of the domestic architecture of the Middle Ages, the double range of windows, subdivided by a great oaken post in the centre, containing in the upper lights a considerable proportion of the original glass. Portions of the figures of angels holding shields can be seen, and on one of them appear the arms of Henry VI. (1422-61) and his wife, Margaret of Anjou. There are very few rooms in the old inns of England which preserve so much of the atmosphere of pre-Reformation days as this ancient hall of the "Old King's Head."

The "White Hart Hotel" has disappeared. In its place stands the Corn Exchange and Market Hall. It is said that this inn was restored by Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, the notorious rake and poet of Charles II.'s reign, in gratitude for its



THE MEDIÆVAL HALL OF THE "OLD KING'S HEAD" AT
AYLESBURY

It dates from the middle of the xvth century, and retains in
the windows some of the original stained glass.

having lodged his father in 1655 when he was making a fruitless effort to rekindle the Civil War.

The landlord was then a certain Mr. Gilvey, whose pretty daughter Grace was loved by two men, one a Parliamentarian, the other a Royalist. There is a lengthy poem on the theme. At the Restoration in 1660 Grace married the Royalist. It seems certain that the Wilmots considered themselves under obligations to the Gilveys. At any rate, the Rochester Room, with a ceiling by Verrio, was a fact until 1864. In 1835 the second Marquis of Waterford brought his horse up into the room, and did some damage before he could get out—being presumably somewhat inebriated, a not uncommon after-dinner condition in those free-living days. In 1831 Mr. Leach Manning, a sporting farmer, performed some more equestrian feats in the room.

The old church of St. Mary is an ornament to the town, and its picturesque central tower surmounted by a curious lead-covered lantern spire groups attractively with the Georgian houses on either side of Church Street, by which it is approached. In plan the chancel and transepts are out of line with the nave; in fact, the majority of the walls run off at arbitrary angles from one another in a manner the purpose of which is difficult to understand. The tower is oblong and not rectangular, and the south porch has its western wall askew. This lack of right angles is not at all unusual, chancels being often out of line with naves, and at Bledlow the nave has a rhomboidal form. There can be little doubt that

some of these vagaries of plan are due to settlement of walls, but others seem to be the result of indifference to correctness of angles; and possibly the position of the chancel, when deliberately out of line with the rest of the building, may have been intentional.

There is nothing left of the Norman predecessor of the existing church, which is to a great extent of the Early English period. That there was an earlier structure may be inferred from the fine xiith-century font, whose bowl is skilfully ornamented with a fluted design and a band of foliage having a very strong Byzantine feeling. This font has been selected for the name of a type, examples of the Aylesbury form being found at Buckland, Great Missenden, Bledlow and elsewhere.

Lace-making was at one time one of the chief industries of Buckinghamshire, and in the xviiith and xixth centuries scarcely a cottage did not have its skilled workers with bobbins and thread. The complicated machinery of Nottingham inevitably killed this ideal type of home industry, and it is only through associations for the encouragement of hand-made lace that any is made to-day.

In the museum at Aylesbury there is preserved a curious example of candle-lamp used by the lace-makers of the past. It consists of a three-legged stool in which four small glass globes of water are held on short wooden supports, in whose centre is an adjustable wooden candlestick. In this way one flame threw four strong beams of light on as many lace-makers' pillows, and work

could go on happily and inexpensively in the long winter evenings.

An Aylesbury duck is as familiar a term as

Southdown mutton or York ham, and fortunately duck-farming is still carried on in the Vale of Aylesbury, where the clay soil provides ponds without number. In Georgian times the low-lying parts of the county produced very large numbers of ducks, scarcely a cottage being without the waddling white birds in picturesque contrast with the rich green of the lowland turf.

Waddesdon Road.

The village of Waddesdon is dominated by the Manor, a modern building in the style of the Château of Blois,

formerly the seat of the late Baron Ferdinand Rothschild, and subsequently of his sister, Miss Alice de Rothschild. Through the care bestowed



A LACE-MAKERS' CANDLE-LAMP

It is in Aylesbury Museum, and is a clever contrivance, by which a single candle throws four beams of light through spherical globes of water.

upon it by the wealthy possessors of the Manor, Waddesdon has become a model village.

In the church one may see the progress of Gothic architecture from Transitional Norman to the xvith century, the south nave arcade being mainly of the earliest period, and a window by the porch of the latest. A brass, dated 1548, to Hugh Brystowe, who is shown in a shroud, bears the following rhyming inscription:

Some tyme I was person [parson] here
Of thes church at Wadsdon
Above the Space of fforty yere
Elect unto the ffirst Porcyon
A thowsand ffyve hundredth forty and ayght.

Another brass is to Sir Roger Dynham, who died in 1490. It shows the knight wearing a heraldic tabard, plate armour, and a great sword hung from a loose belt, while his head rests on a tilting helmet.

Quainton Road. A monument to the Rev. Richard Brett, one of the translators of the Authorised Version of the Bible, is to be seen in the church of Quainton, where there are also many tombs of the Dormers and the Winwoods. It was one of the latter family who, in 1687, built the gabled almshouses whose fine brickwork and picturesque chimneys are an adornment to the village.

Akeman Street is a railway station on the Roman road between St. Albans and Bath (Aquæ Sulis). At this point one is on a section of the ancient trunk-road which is still in use for a distance of

some fifteen miles between Bicester and Aylesbury, whence it continues to Tring, but from that place eastwards its course is uncertain.

About a couple of miles to the north-west is Grendon Underwood, a straggling village with its church at the extreme end. Curious and unauthenticated legends concerning Shakespeare cling to this place. One story has it that on his road from London to Stratford-on-Avon he passed the night at "The Ship" inn, a house still standing, although it is no longer a hostelry. While there the *Midsummer Night's Dream* is said to have suggested itself to the poet's mind, or at least that he noted certain touches of humour which he used in the play. But this is not all; it is also said that he was found by two constables sleeping in the church porch, and that these two worthies are supposed to have provided material for the creation of Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado about Nothing*. The church possesses no porch to-day, but because of this it would be unfair to throw overboard the whole collection of legends, however frail may be their basis.

This village and its neighbour, Wotton Underwood, derive their names from Bernwood Forest, whose ancient groves are doubtless represented by the many oak-woods of the district.

Wotton. Close to the village of Wotton Underwood is the beautiful Wotton Park, containing a large lake bordered by shadowy woodlands. Three miles to the west, on a picturesque isolated ridge, is the wind-swept old village of Brill. On its common there still stand two windmills, one of

them of xviiith-century date, built of massive timber and covered with weather-boarding. A partially obliterated date carved on a beam gives the year of construction about 1680.¹ Very few examples of windmills of this date are now left standing.

The church stands at a height of nearly 600 feet above sea-level, and has a Norman nave and chancel modified by later alterations and additions. Painted on the soffit of the Early English chancel arch are representations of St. Peter (north) and St. Paul (south). The manor-house is a beautiful example of the Tudor period, built on an E-shaped plan, and there are farm-houses and cottages of the xviiith century which add great charm to the scenery. It is indeed no matter for surprise that this healthful breezy spot was chosen as a residence by Saxon and Norman kings when they came a-hunting in the Forest of Bernwood. This association with royalty is no idle tale; it is pure history. Edward the Confessor had a villa here and (to stray into the byways of legend for a moment) at Burh-hill, or Brill, he is said to have restored sight to one Wulwyn, a blind man who had visited eighty-seven shrines without avail! Stephen lived here for a time. Henry II., in 1160, signed documents which were witnessed by Thomas à Becket. In 1205 John spent Christmas at Brill; probably a somewhat gloomy festival, for the sinister news of defeats in Normandy must have been arriving at this time, and he could

¹ The first and last numeral is obliterated.—*Hist. Mon. Com. Report, Bucks*, 1912.

hardly have failed to realise that the great duchy was slipping from his power.

In a dip of the ridge of which Brill occupies the highest point is the village of Chilton, whose church dates from Norman times, but is mainly Early English and Perpendicular. The monuments and brasses to members of the Croke family are all interesting. There is a brass to John Croke the "Ealder" (died in 1554), who was a Master in Chancery, and another to Sir John Croke, a Judge of the King's Bench, who died in 1619. In a semicircular recess is a great table-tomb bearing the effigies of another Sir John Croke (died 1608) and of Elizabeth, his wife. He is shown in the armour of late Elizabethan times, and he wears a ruff. His wife is in a black dress, and two of the eight sons are shown in the scarlet robes of judges. Another interesting monument shows a kneeling figure of Elizabeth, a daughter of Sir John Croke, with a chrisom child; she was the wife of Sir John Tyrrell of Heron. There are many other interesting features in the church, including an hour-glass stand, a xvth-century funeral helm, and a cross-legged effigy of a knight in chain mail of the xiiith century.

The road which follows the crest of this outlying ridge of the Chilterns drops down into the plain at Long Crendon. It is an ancient and interesting village and, difficult as it may be to believe, it manufactured needles until within two generations of the present time. Its most remarkable building is the picturesque Court House, which was saved from demolition in 1899 by the National Trust

for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings. It was built in the xvth century as a Staple Hall in connection with the wool trade, but when this industry had decayed it was converted into the Manorial Court House. The park of the Giffards, Earls of Buckingham, who were owners of the Manor of Crendon, and had their castle here, is the only one mentioned in Domesday Book, and this makes it disappointing that park and stronghold have both entirely vanished. Henry V.'s French queen, Katherine, whom he married in 1420, held the manor, and in her name courts were held by her steward, Walter Beauchamp. About half a mile north-east of Long Crendon, above the road to Chearsley, a Roman cemetery was found on Cop Hill in 1824. The Angle Way, an ancient roadway adjoining, may possibly be of Roman date, or was perhaps improved in Romano-British times.

Long Crendon church, at the northern end of the village, adjoins the xviii-century manor-house, and is a very perfectly-planned cruciform building with central tower, transepts and nave aisles. The chancel is Early English, and many additions carry the building down to the xviii century. In the south transept is a very fine monument bearing the effigies of Sir John Dormer and his wife Jane. He is shown wearing the quaint armour of 1605, and his wife is attired in a long-waisted bodice and wears an elaborate coif and ruff.

Down close to the River Thame, just below the confluence of a tributary stream, are the remains of Notley Abbey, now converted into a capacious

farm-house. The portion still standing consists mainly of the guest-house and the range of buildings along the western side of the cloister garth. It is stone-built and of two storeys, and presents a pleasing and picturesque appearance with its mullioned windows, with traceried heads here and there. The monastery was founded in Norman times as a house of Austin Canons. Nothing whatever remains of the church, and a modern range of farm buildings occupies the site of the dormitory.

Haddenham is a very pretty village with a green ornamented with a pond, and its church has a stately tower of the Early English period. The arcading in the upper storey is singularly satisfying, and the tower ranks as one of the best in the county. The chancel, the nave and the tower all date from about 1215, a famous year in the annals of England;¹ aisles were added about half a century later, and the north chapel is mainly of xvth-century date. In many ways this is a remarkable building, from its xiiith-century font, on which are sculptured two fighting dragons, to the screens and fragmentary wall-paintings.

Three miles to the south-west is the little town of Thame, on the main road to Oxford and Bicester. If one wishes to avoid motor-infested highways one will turn in the other direction, and make for such out-of-the-way places as Chearsley, Cuddington, and Lower Winchendon, where one is under the shadow of a ridge traversed by the road to Waddesdon, from which beautiful views of the

¹ Magna Carta was signed by the unspeakable King John.



KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

It is one of the three finest Perpendicular interiors in England.

From a drawing by F. Mackenzie engraved by Hy. le Keux.

Chilterns can be obtained across the valley of the Thame. One could linger for weeks in this pleasant country and always find something fresh as an objective for a ramble; but there are attractions further north, where the Chilterns dip down towards the Fens, and to this country the next chapter is devoted.

CHAPTER III

ALONG THE LEA VALLEY

THE Icknield Way continues its course from Wendover along the slopes of the Chilterns in a north-easterly direction, and as it begins to descend the flank of the hills to the hollows which cradle the infant Lea it crosses the Roman Watling Street in the centre of Dunstable. Whether the town grew up on account of this fact, or was established here in such remote times that roads naturally directed themselves to it, is a matter difficult to determine, but I am inclined to think that the first is more probable. The place is surrounded by evidences of the early population, and at Maiden Bower, a mile and a half to the west, is a camp of the Bronze Age, while a mile further in the same direction are the Totternhoe camps, which appear to be of Celtic origin altered in later times. Mr. Worthington Smith, who devoted much time to the subject, thought that a small Roman camp had been laid out close to a look-out station of the bronze-using people.

Prehistoric weapons and pottery have been found at various points in the neighbourhood, and at Cuddington, three miles to the east, palæoliths, or worked flints of the Old Stone Age, have been found on the slopes of the downs. From the

distances given in the Antonine Itinerary there can be little doubt that Dunstable is the modern representative of the place referred to as Durocobrivæ, which was twelve Roman miles north of Verulamium (St. Albans). The only indications, however, of the presence of a Romano-British settlement on the spot are the pottery (as a rule fragmentary) which the spade brings to light. This includes the red-glazed ware known as Samian, which ceased to be manufactured after the iind century, cooking vessels and examples of the British-made pottery made at Castor near Peterborough.¹

Dunstable possesses in its priory church a building which is in some ways unique. The west front, surmounted by an embattled north-west tower, suggests a medley of the monastic and the parochial. Transitional-Norman doorways, enriched with a great display of sculptured mouldings, are surmounted by a range of beautiful Early English arcading, and over the central portal are two very deeply-recessed lancet windows flanked to the north by six arches, forming a gallery.

An Augustinian priory was founded about 1132 by Henry I., and fortunately when the Dissolution came only the eastern portions of the church were destroyed, the stately Norman nave being adapted for the purposes of a parish church. Maimed though it may be, the nave with its remarkable western façade ranks among the finest of the ecclesiastical buildings in Bedfordshire. The whole

¹ See p. 140.

of the nave and triforium are Romanesque, although the triforium is disguised under modern work in the Perpendicular style. There would originally have been a pulpit or choir-screen separating the nave from the eastern part of the building, but this no longer exists, its place being taken by a wooden screen dating from the xivth century, which now cuts off part of the eastern end of the nave to form a shallow choir.

Matthew Paris mentions the performance of the miracle play of *St. Katherine* at Dunstable about the year 1115, which would be about seventeen years before the priory was founded. It was a notable occurrence, for it appears to have been the first miracle play to be acted in England. In the following century the little town was adorned by Edward I. with one of the series of crosses which he erected to the memory of Queen Eleanor. This continued to exist until 1643; but there is no authentic information as to how the destruction came about, beyond a tradition that the soldiery under the Parliamentary leader, Lord Essex, were responsible. Much, however, is known of the details concerning the construction. Only at Dunstable and St. Albans are there contemporary written records of the religious observances which took place when the solemn funeral procession was on its way from Lincoln to London in the year 1290. For one night the body of the queen rested in the little town, the procession halting in the market-place in order that, as had been arranged, the body of the queen should come to rest on the exact spot where the cross was to

be set up. When night fell the coffin was taken from the bier and placed before the high altar of the priory church in the choir which, unfortunately, exists no longer. The prior, whose name was Wederow, personally superintended the preparation of the ground where the cross was to be erected, and sprinkled the spot with holy water.

An event of greater historical importance which occurred at Dunstable was the holding of the Court by Cranmer in 1533 by which Henry VIII.'s marriage with Katherine of Aragon was annulled, and thus the great breach was formed between the Anglican Church and Papal authority.

Ever since the XVIIIth century the town has achieved a certain fame on account of its manufacture of straw plaits for hat-making.

For those who love the joyous notes of the lark, the downs in the Dunstable neighbourhood have a perennial attraction, for they have long been famed for the great numbers of these birds. It is a melancholy fact that in the "larking" season it is not uncommon for 300 to 400 to be caught or killed in a single night. The famous lark-pies of "The Cheshire Cheese" in Fleet Street must be provided with this ingredient so long as there are those who will devour small song-birds, and the Chilterns may be one source of supply—*qui sait?*

Luton has now grown to be a town of considerable size, for besides its straw-plaiting industry it has developed foundries and other manufactures, including motor-cars. It was Mary, Queen

of Scots, who induced a certain number of straw-plaiters to go to Scotland from her native Lorraine, and it was her son, James I., who transplanted the new industry to Luton. The name of the place is a corruption of Lyge-tun or Lea-town; the river of that name rises in the Chiltern Hills a few miles away, and passing through the town takes its way towards Hatfield and Hertford. In the church of St. Mary one finds the three great periods of Gothic architecture represented, and the baptistery is a remarkable feature of the Decorated period. A number of interesting monuments and brasses recall the names and features of past Lutonians.

Harpenden. At this place the county which Lamb calls "hearty, homely, loving Hertfordshire" is entered, and one is welcomed by this little town spread out picturesquely along the main road from St. Albans to Bedford. The gorse-grown common adds to Harpenden a gilded charm, and close to the village stands the beautiful old gabled house of Rothampstead in its fine elm-shaded park. The church has lately been to a great extent rebuilt, but it contains a Norman font and some interesting brasses, including one to William Annabull and his wife, dated 1441. About a mile and a half to the east, on a by-lane leading to nowhere in particular, is the picturesque old house so suitably named Mackery End, which Charles Lamb¹ writes of so pleasantly in one of his essays. It is a charming

¹ Lamb was born in Crown Office Row in the Inner Temple in 1775. He died in 1834.

old place of Jacobean times, possessing good gables and chimneys, and is probably in very much the same condition as in the days when Charles Lamb was there. He writes in this fashion:

The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End, . . . a farmhouse, delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathamstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child under the care of Bridget [his cousin], who . . . is older than myself by some ten years. . . . The sight of the old farmhouse, though every trace of it was effaced from my recollection, affected me with a pleasure which I had not experienced for many a year. For, though I had forgotten it, we had never forgotten being there together, and we had been talking about Mackery End all our lives. . . . Bridget's was a more waking bliss than mine, for she easily remembered her old acquaintance again. . . . She traversed every outpost of the old mansion—to the wood-house, the orchard, the place where the pigeon-house had stood—with a breathless impatience of recognition, which was more pardonable, perhaps, than decorous at the age of fifty odd. But Bridget in some things is behind her years.

Wheathamstead is an old-world village containing picturesque cottages and a charmingly situated church. It is in the valley of the Lea, which passes through the village at a point where an old inn makes a pleasing background. In the south transept of the church one may see an early arch which may be of pre-Norman date, and the woodwork is interesting, the Carolian pulpit dating from 1634, and some of the pews from

about the same period. The legend that King John ascended a previous tower of the church during his war with the barons to watch his mercenary troops cross the river, although it appears to rest on no authority, is not necessarily entirely wide of the mark.

To the north lies hilly common-land, known as Gustardwood Green, a breezy and pleasant upland made beautiful with heather and gorse. Half a mile further to the east is Ayot St. Lawrence, one of the most unspoiled villages in the county. It is almost unique in being entirely free from any hint of advertising, and even the little inn only displays its sign in such a discreet form that it might be passed almost unnoticed. The post office reveals itself by the existence of a tiny slot for letters beneath a very old-fashioned type of window, and so far from the madding crowd and the maddening motor-way is this pleasant spot that one can almost forget the changes which have been wrought in the last half-century. The old church is no longer used, but the roofless ruin, standing in a beautifully kept garden-like graveyard, adorns the entrance to the park of Ayot House. Across the greensward a footpath leads to the modern church, built on very classical lines and backed by trees, much as though it were an ornamental Greek temple of the type the landscape gardeners delighted to place at suitable points in the parks which they rearranged for their XVIIIth-century patrons.

Welwyn. Dr. Young, the author of *Night Thoughts*, was the rector of Welwyn until he died

in 1765 and was buried in the Decorated church. Changes have come over the rural surroundings of this village in recent years owing to the establishment of a Garden Suburb, which for some years to come will doubtless have a newness of aspect disturbing to the landscape. It is fortunate, however, that the Renaissance of taste and proportion in domestic architecture in England coincides with this new development. The immediate surroundings remain rural, and very attractive walks through lanes and footpaths lead up the valley by the little stream known as the Mimram, or down the valley past Tewin to Hertingfordbury. About four miles to the south, by the main road to London, is the little town of Hatfield.

Hatfield. The name is associated so much with the stately home of the Cecils that it has overshadowed entirely the interests connected with the town. The old name of the place was Bishop's Hatfield, and Archbishop Morton, the Primate of England and minister of Henry VIII., had his palace there in the days before the dissolution of the monasteries. The refectory of the palace survives, its beautiful roof still in a good state of preservation, although reduced to covering the stables of to-day.

It was in the reign of James I.—between 1607 and 1611—that Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury, son of the great Lord Burghley, who directed Elizabeth's policy for so many years, built the existing Hatfield House. Stone was brought from Caen in Normandy, and a vast number of vines

were procured in France for the vinery, and in the four years during which building proceeded £7631 were spent. It is a singularly fine example of a dignified house of the period, and the main approach between an avenue of hoary elms adds much to the impression which the building makes upon the mind. When the family is absent the public is allowed to inspect the interior on two afternoons a week (generally Wednesdays and Thursdays), and thus may be seen the beautiful galleries, the chapel, and certain rooms with their fine old furniture and many interesting and historic relics. In one of the apartments there are preserved in a glass case a hat and also some yellow silk stockings worn by Queen Elizabeth when, as princess, she passed some years of her youth in the old building which had been a palace of the Bishops of Ely. Although virtually a State prisoner while her sister Mary was Queen of England, Elizabeth was being educated here in circumstances which could scarcely have been unhappy for her. One reads of a succession of masques and revels arranged for the princess's amusement, and no doubt Sir Thomas Pope, who was entrusted with her guardianship, found that by such distractions he could best control the waywardness of his charge. One of these occasions was on Shrove Tuesday in 1556, when Sir Thomas "made for the Ladie Elizabeth, all at his own costes, a great and rich maskenge in the great halle at Hatfelde; where the pageauntes were marvellously furnished. . . . And the next day the play of Holofernes." As in the case of her brother Edward, the news



THE MAIN FRONT OF HATFIELD HOUSE

The Jacobean seat of the Marquess of Salisbury, built by Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury, between 1607 and 1611.

of her accession to the throne of England was brought to Elizabeth at Hatfield.

Besides what is now the stables, there are other portions of the old palace still standing quite sufficient to enable one to picture the surroundings of the great queen's childhood.

The beautiful Salisbury Chapel, which was added to the church in 1618, contains the remarkable tomb of the first Earl of Salisbury, who died only a very few years after his great mansion was finished. The effigy rests on a slab supported by four kneeling female figures, and shows the earl in the robes of the Lord High Chancellor; beneath, after the ghoulish fashion of the age, is shown a skeleton.

In the park there still stands the oak associated with the story that it was when seated in its shade Elizabeth was informed of the death of her sister Queen Mary, and of her own accession to the throne. Unfortunately for this legend the event occurred in the middle of November, which would be an unlikely time of the year, especially in Hertfordshire, to sit under a leafless oak; and even if the day had chanced to be mild, the ground would surely have been unpleasantly damp!

St. Albans. When one realises that the historic town of St. Albans is only about twenty miles from the heart of London, and much less from the outer suburbs, it is a matter of no small surprise to find how many there are who have yet to know how much the picturesque old place has to offer. That this was one of the oldest and most important of the Celtic towns of Britain, that it was

Romanised very soon after the Claudian invasion, and that it eventually saw the establishment of a monastery on the hill above the site of the ancient town which was to educate a youth who eventually became Pope Adrian IV., are facts which ought to stir the imagination of the most sluggish minds. And when, in addition, it is known that the monastic church now the Cathedral of St. Albans is to a great extent built of Roman bricks from the ruins of Verulamium just below, and has one of the earliest naves in England, no further inducement should be needed for deciding the date when a visit shall be paid. If Hatfield House is included in the same day, one can get in direct touch with an amazing range of English history—from the last phase of Roman Britain to the comparatively modern times of James I.

The first St. Albans did not occupy the same site as the present town on the ridge, Verulam, its British predecessor, standing close to the little stream known as the Ver just below. It was possibly the fortified town of Cassivelaunus which Cæsar took by storm in 54 B.C. When, nearly a century later, Britain was conquered and added to the Roman Empire, Verulam was made a *municipium*, and no doubt, from its original importance, became one of the chief towns of the new province. It may have been at that time as large or larger than London.

During the revolt of the Iceni under Boudicca in A.D. 61 the town was destroyed; but rising from its ruins it resumed its old importance, although possibly its development may have been to some

extent retarded. In the iiird or ivth century it was surrounded by a wall of flint rubble, bonded with courses of red brick, and of this considerable portions still remain, although of the buildings within its area of 203 acres nothing whatever remains to be seen. Much discussion has taken place as to the age of the walls of the church of St. Michael, which stands roughly in a central position within the city area. Does it or does it not incorporate in its fabric portions of a Romano-British structure? While it is quite possible that it may do so, it is more likely that the oldest parts of the church belong to a post-Roman date, although the materials are mainly those found on the site and used again in the new structure, as at Colchester, Canterbury, Reculver, and a great many other places.

It is a melancholy fact that although this site—it is one of the most important still available for excavation in this country—remains entirely open arable land or pasture, yet so indifferent has the nation remained to the possibilities of adding materially to the knowledge of the Romano-British epoch that scarcely any excavation has taken place in the whole area. Thus there remains hidden from view the whole plan and arrangement of this Romanised Celtic town. In one sense the delay in making a systematic exploration of Verulamium has been an advantage, for until recent years the methods employed in excavating such sites have not been very scientific, with resulting loss to the information which has been obtained.

About the year 303, Albanus, the protomartyr of Britain, was beheaded, and over the place of his martyrdom there was built a church containing a shrine which made it a place of some importance, St. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, visiting it in 429. Possibly about 460 the shrine was destroyed by the English invaders, and in 795 Offa, King of Mercia, founded a Benedictine monastery over the martyr's tomb, which was destined to become one of the greatest in England. By 1154 it had superseded Glastonbury as the premier abbey, and its abbot was a peer of Parliament right up to the Dissolution.

Around the monastery grew up a small town whose inhabitants were kept very much under the heel of the abbey, a situation which resulted in perpetual complaints against the oppression of the abbots. In the reign of Richard II. occurred the Peasants' Revolt, led at St. Albans by Richard Grindecobbe, who succeeded in compelling the signing of a charter by which the monastery abandoned some of its privileges. Soon afterwards, however, this was revoked by Richard II., and the peasants' leader was put to death. During the Wars of the Roses, St. Albans was the scene of two battles; the first took place in 1455, when the Lancastrians opposed the march of the Yorkists upon London. After a brief struggle the Earl of Warwick broke into the streets of the town, and the Duke of Somerset was killed, Henry VI. being taken prisoner. In the second battle, which occurred in 1461, the Yorkists were defeated by an army consisting to a great extent of half-savage Welsh,

Scots and Irish, who sacked the town after their victory. In Elizabethan times Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Chancellor, and his son, Francis Bacon,



IN THE CENTRE OF ST. ALBANS

On the right is the unique clock tower, and in the distance that of the cathedral.

Lord Verulam, lived at Gorhambury, about a mile to the west of the town, where part of the old house still stands. The latter is claimed by the

Baconian School as the author of Shakespeare's works, partly on account of the many references to St. Albans to be found in the plays.

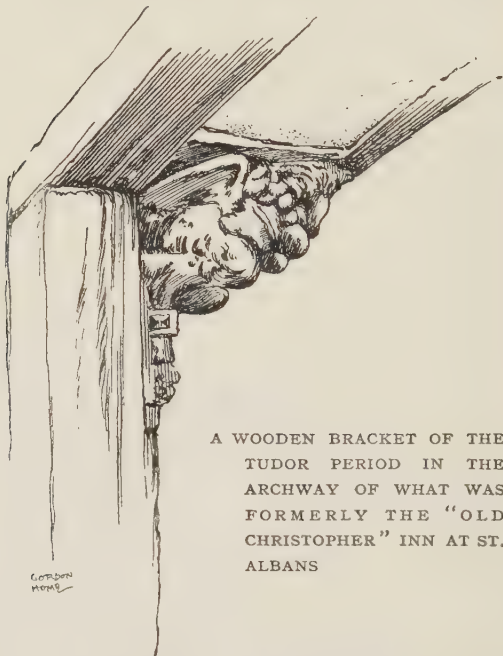
In spite of being so near the metropolis, St. Albans remains picturesque and curiously mediæval in its atmosphere. The solemn lines of its great monastery church, now the Cathedral, dominate the place, and in addition it has preserved its unique town belfry built between 1402 and 1410, and containing two bells, the larger of which, known as the curfew bell, dates back to about 1335, and weighs approximately a ton. It bears the inscription, "*Missi de coelis, habeo nomen Gabrielis.*"¹

The domestic architecture of the central portion of St. Albans is full of charm and warmth of colour. There are quaint corners and inviting archways, such as that which leads from French Row into the courtyard of the "Old Christopher" Inn. This famous hostelry fell on evil days, and was finally closed, but one can still see an indication of its past glories in the grotesque Renaissance bracket illustrated here (p. 70).

The Cathedral has the longest Gothic nave in the world, it stands on higher ground than any other in England, and of the greater English churches it is the oldest now standing. The Norman building, although consecrated in 1115, was mainly constructed in the previous century by Paul of Caen, and in its main lines the existing structure is that erected at this early period. The central tower, transepts and the eastern bays of the nave, constructed with Roman red bricks, stand to-day

¹ Sent from Heaven, I have the name of Gabriel.

much as they were built, stern, massive and simple. Internally, the ponderous Norman columns and arcades are plaster-covered, and still decorated with early painted patterns.



A WOODEN BRACKET OF THE
TUDOR PERIOD IN THE
ARCHWAY OF WHAT WAS
FORMERLY THE "OLD
CHRISTOPHER" INN AT ST.
ALBANS

At the Restoration the shrine of St. Alban was destroyed, but its fragments were re-discovered in recent times, and, having been pieced together, one can again see something of the form of what must have originally been a very gorgeous and eye-filling monument of mediæval colour.

Close to the shrine, in the chapel of St. Alban, is a magnificent tomb of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (1391-1447), who was Protector and guardian of Henry VI. when the early death of his father in France placed the boy on the throne.

In 1447 Humphrey was arrested at the parliament of Bury St. Edmunds, and four days later he died, whether by foul play or not remains uncertain; it may be that a constitution weakened by excesses could not stand the shock caused by the sudden change in his fortunes. For nearly two years the duke had ruled England, and possibly on account of his courtly presence and his having been a liberal patron of letters, he had attained a popularity which caused him to be remembered as the “Good Duke Humphrey.” Yet he seems to have lacked the usual qualities which are the foundation of any such popular esteem, being selfish and without principle, and he certainly showed no genius for command in peace or in war.

Hertingfordbury is in the valley of the Mimram a mile or so west of its confluence with the Lea, of which it has been called the aristocratic tributary, on account of the number of beautiful parks adorning its course. Certainly Panshanger, formerly the seat of the Earls Cowper, is an added charm to the valley, and although the house is a late Georgian structure in castellated Tudor style, its ivied walls now tone well with the leafy surroundings.

In the much-restored church, the wood carving of the pews was chiselled by Josef Mayr of Ober-Ammergau. The Cowper family has a chapel in

which are monuments to the second earl and to Spencer Cowper, Judge of the Common Pleas.

Hertford. "Upon the winding course of Lee's delightful brook," as Drayton wrote three centuries ago, is the county town of Hertfordshire. If it possess few ancient buildings to-day, it is not because of any lack of antiquity in its origin, for in 673 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle mentions a synod that was held there. In the struggle between the English and the Danes, Hertford is referred to in the same chronicle as the place where Edward the Elder in 913 built a fortress on the south side of the Lea. No doubt the water-way uniting it with London gave the place a strategic importance which Edward could not overlook. The hastily-constructed castle of this period was replaced soon after the Norman Conquest, perhaps by Peter de Valoignes, and there remain to-day a wall and part of a tower of Norman date. The earthen mound in the grounds of the castle close to the river bank very probably belongs to the first castle of the mound-and-bailey type.

One of the rectors of the church of St. Andrew was Thomas Robert Malthus, who became Professor of Political Economy and Modern History in the East India Company's college at Haileybury, which is about two miles from Hertford in the direction of Hoddesdon. It was some years before this, however, that he published his now famous work, *An Essay on the Principle of Population as it affects the future Improvement of Society*. Although his theories brought down upon him a great deal of both misrepresentation and abuse,

Mr. Malthus bore it cheerfully and without bitterness. His private life was irreproachable, and besides being a man of the greatest culture he appears to have been distinguished by the beauty of his character and a great love of truth.

Ware has a place in English literature, for not only does the poet Chaucer make reference to it, but Shakespeare mentions its famous bed in *Twelfth Night*, while Cowper brings John Gilpin to Ware because his horse would come.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house"—
They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits, and we are tired";
Said Gilpin,—“So am I!”

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

It is an old town on the Great North Road, which is the modern representative of the Ermine or Erming Street which existed in some form in Roman times and led from London to Lincoln and York, being the great thoroughfare from the capital to the military headquarters in the north. For many years it has been one of the largest centres for the manufacture of malt, and the crows over the drying kilns are a conspicuous feature of the town.

Up to the time of Henry III., Ware was held in subjection to Hertford on the question of a toll which had to be paid to the bailiff of that place by all who passed over the bridge. On this account

traffic was naturally deflected up the valley—a distance of two or three miles. However, in the XIIIth century, the people of Ware, led by the determined Saier de Quincey, broke the chain across the bridge and flung it into the river, announcing at the same time that the Bailiff of Hertford should follow the chain if he objected. Free passage being established, Ware prospered, and inns grew in numbers. The fame of the great bed at “The Crown,” afterwards at “The Bull,” and later at “The Saracen’s Head” brought numbers to the little town who might never have troubled themselves to think of stopping there.¹

Turpin’s ride to Ware chased by the Chief Constable of Westminster is pure fiction, an invention of Harrison Ainsworth’s imagination, which is to be found in his *Rookwood*.

A Franciscan priory is mentioned here in the reign of Edward III. It was dissolved in 1545, and now the house known as the Priory only preserves part of the cloisters and adjoining rooms.

The fine cruciform church is of flint rubble with an embattled tower, mainly of the Decorated and Perpendicular periods. A brass on the east wall of the chancel is notable on account of its giving the date in both Roman and Arabic numerals. It is one of the earliest examples in which the latter numerals were employed. Another brass, dated c. 1470, with an incomplete inscription, is to W. Pyrry (or Pyrey), who married twice, and was the father of twenty children. When one contemplates the number of nursemaids required

¹ See *Rye House*, p. 77.

for such a family, and considers the cost of their education and other urgent needs, one is overwhelmed at the task which this stout citizen of Ware seems to have undertaken.

St. Margaret's is the station for Stanstead Abbots, where the almshouses, a monument in the old church of St. James, and the gabled house of Stansteadbury all recall the memory of an Elizabethan lord of the manor who held a responsible post in the Royal Navy. He was Sir Edward Baesh, and the title of the office which he occupied was "General Surveyor of the Victuals for the Navy Royal and Marine affairs within the Realms of England and Ireland." His death occurred in 1587, the year in which the Spanish Armada was completing its preparations for the great naval attack upon England, and one cannot help wondering whether the knowledge of this impending onslaught was in any way a contributory cause of his death, for in holding such an office he could not have failed to have intimate knowledge of how seriously Elizabeth's parsimonious policy had depleted the arsenals, and how greatly at a disadvantage would be the defence when required to arm and provision a considerable fleet.

On the heavily-wooded western slopes of the valley is Haileybury College, now one of the well-known public schools of England. It was founded by the East India Company for their Civil Service students in the year of Trafalgar. A little to the north is Great Amwell, mentioned several times by Charles Lamb in his correspondence. Here one is in a part of the country very much associated

76 ALONG THE LEA VALLEY

with this pleasant essayist, and at Widford a few miles up the Ash, a tributary of the Lea, there is in the churchyard a tombstone to Mrs. Mary Feild, bearing some lines of the poem Lamb wrote to her memory. Great Amwell church stands on a leafy hill-slope just above the New River. Nave and apsidal chancel are Romanesque, and the chancel arch has been called "Saxon." Isaac Reed, the Shakespearean editor who died in 1807, and also Shakespeare's friend, Thomas Warner, were buried here, and the place was also the home for the greater part of his life of John Scott, the XVIIIth-century Quaker poet. In one of the best of his poems he wrote of Amwell's rural charms:

So my pleas'd eye, which o'er the prospect wide
Has wander'd round, and various objects mark'd,
On Amwell rests at last, its favourite scene.

The slender group of airy elms, the clump
Of pollard oak, of ash, with ivy-brown
Entwin'd; the walnut's gloomy breadth of boughs,
The orchard's ancient fence of rugged pales,
The haystack's dusky cone, the moss-grown shed,
The clay-built barn, the elder-shaded cot.

As he goes on to describe the charms of the gardens, humming with bees and perfumed with flowers, the sweet rural charm of this beautiful bend of the Lea valley a century and a half ago is unfolded to the imagination.

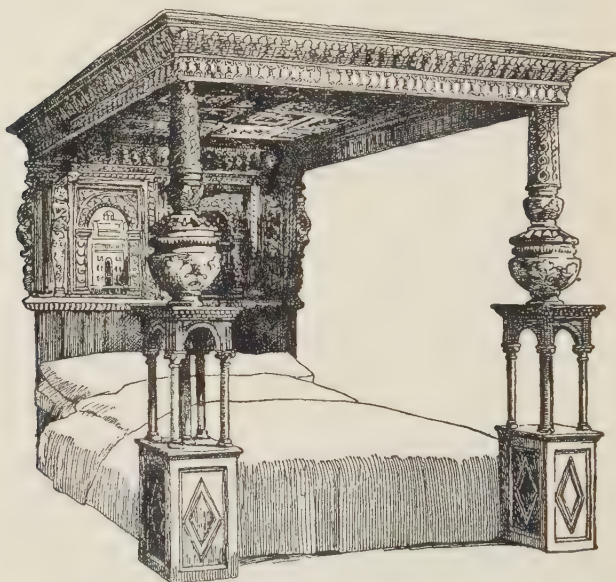
Near the church are the village stocks, and on a small island is a statue to Sir Hugh Myddelton, who was the wealthy goldsmith of London who, in the reign of James I., carried out the Corpora-

tion's idea of supplying the City with water from the springs at Ware by means of a canal—the New River. The great enterprise, which was begun in 1609 and finished in 1613, entailed the construction of thirty-eight miles of canal, ten feet in width and four feet deep, the waters of which were discharged into a reservoir at Islington, known as the New River Head. Myddelton received a baronetcy as a reward for his successful completion of an undertaking which had proved a very considerable drain on his financial resources.

Rye House. The scene of the plot to assassinate Charles II. and the Duke of York, who was to become James II., is close to the Lea in the rich riverside scenery which Izaak Walton has made classical in *The Compleat Angler*. To explore the valley of the Lea without having first refreshed one's memory of Walton's genial pages is to miss a great deal. His natural history may not be entirely in accord with the facts of nature, and some of his stories may be tedious, but this xviiith-century tradesman's love of the scenery and of sport and conviviality is delightful. Lamb described *The Compleat Angler*, when writing to Coleridge, as breathing "the very spirit of innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart," and adds that "it would sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it."

It was not many years after the good Izaak's work had been published that the Rye House Plot was hatched in 1683 by Colonel Rumbold, the owner at that time. The King and his brother were to be killed on their way back to town from Newmarket, and but for the chance that they returned

earlier than was anticipated, it is quite possible that both would have met a sudden death at this old Tudor house, whose red-brick gateway flanked



THE GREAT BED OF WARE

The famous bed referred to by Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night*. It is about 12 feet square, and will provide sleeping space for a dozen persons. Since 1869 it has been preserved at Rye House.

by two oriel windows still stands. When the plot was discovered the ringleader escaped to Holland, but two years later, after having joined Argyll in Scotland, he was beheaded in Edinburgh.

Although innocent, Lord Russell and Algernon

THE GREAT BED OF WARE 79

Sidney were charged with high treason, found guilty and executed, the first being buried at Chenies.¹

On the gatehouse can be seen the arms of Andrew Ogard, who built the place in the reign of Henry VI., and of vastly greater interest to the majority is the famous "Great Bed of Ware," which was brought here in 1869. Although the date 1463 which appears on the bed was added later, it was famous by the time of Shakespeare, who mentions it in *Twelfth Night*:

Sir Andrew Ague-cheek. Will either of you bear me a challenge to him?

Sir Toby Belch. Go, write it with a martial hand; be curst [*i.e.* crabbed] and brief; it is no matter how witty, so it be eloquent and full of invention; taunt him with the licence of ink; if thou *thou'st* him some thrice, it shall not be amiss; and as many lies as will lie on thy sheet of paper, although the sheet were big enough for the bed of Ware in England, set 'em down; go about it. . . .

The dimensions of this great piece of furniture are about twelve feet by twelve, and it is claimed that it will sleep a dozen persons in comfort. I am unaware of any test having been made, or whether, in that case, any record of the measure of comfort enjoyed was recorded. The pillars at the corners are elaborate, and both the back and the canopy are enriched with much carving.

Hoddesdon has a broad street, and still retains something of the atmosphere of coaching days; but Izaak Walton's old "Thatched House" has

¹ See p. 35 for a description of the Bedford Chapel there.

disappeared, and the church is a Georgian one, built in 1732.

It is interesting to read of the entertainment provided for James I. at Broxbournebury when on his way to London from Scotland. His host was Sir Henry Cock, and according to an xviiith-century historian of Hertfordshire:¹

The Entertainment which this worthy Knight gave the King was so great and plentiful, that every Man, of what Condition soever, had what Appetite desired, and the King was highly pleased therewith, staid one Night, and then set forward for Theobalds.

Broxbourne. In the church one may see the monument to Sir Henry Cock, bearing a fine alabaster effigy of the king's host. The building contains other features of interest, including a Norman font, while its position near a lock of the New River is singularly pleasing.

Cheshunt. The name is a corruption of Ceaster, or Cestrehunt, which gives support to the statement made by Grose that this was the site of a Roman *castrum*, and near the station a vessel of the period discovered near by is to be seen built into a wall of the "Roman Urn" Inn. Evidence of continued occupation is provided by the coins from Hadrian to Constantine which have been found here.

Waltham Cross. This place possesses one of the best-preserved crosses erected by Edward I. to his queen, Eleanor of Castile. That the king loved her with an exceptional devotion must be accepted from

¹ Chauncy—published 1700.



WALTHAM CROSS AS IT APPEARED IN 1806

It has since been twice restored, and "The Falcon" inn, shown almost touching the cross, has been removed.

From a drawing by Wm. Alexander engraved by S. Sparrow.

this entirely unique exhibition of his feelings. No other queen has had the route of her funeral procession so memorialised; even the great funeral pageant of that popular hero, Henry V., from the scene of his death in France through Kent to Westminster Abbey was marked by no monuments along its route. One of the first stories of English History taught to children is that of the attack made on Edward I. when he was crusading in the Holy Land; how, seated before his tent unarmed in June 1272, he received a messenger from the Emir of Jaffa, who, having delivered his letter, suddenly struck at the king with a poisoned dagger, which, in shielding himself from the blow, the king received in his arm. Having felled his assailant by a kick before he could strike again, Edward succeeded in wrenching the dagger from his hand, and had given him a fatal blow with it at the moment when help arrived. It was then, according to the oft-told story, that Queen Eleanor, finding that the royal doctors could do nothing for her husband, sucked the poison from the wound in such a skilful manner that a perfect recovery was made. How far one may regard this story as true it is difficult to decide, but there is little doubt that the criticism of the modern medical world would be rather destructive. Indeed, recent historians have, with complete indifference to sentiment, stated that the cure was the result of the work of the surgeons, without any interference or assistance from the queen. If it hurt one to have to abandon such an attractive story of the woman who was brave enough to accompany her

husband in a most arduous campaign, it is still harder to have to believe that, in spite of her virtues and her piety, this Castilian lady had a very shrewd eye to business; certain records tell how



THE GATEWAY AND CHURCH OF WALTHAM ABBEY

she treated her tenants with such hardness that Archbishop Peckham made representations to her in regard to the wrongs they were suffering, stating that redress must come before absolution.

The old inn known as "The Four Swans," which swings its sign right across the road, claims to

have been founded in 1260, which was thirty years before the queen's death.

A mile and a half to the east, across the level green water-meadows of the Lea, is the little town of Waltham Abbey, which grew up round a monastery destined to become the richest in Essex. Its annual income, when, in 1540, it was surrendered to the king's commissioners, was over £900, equal to about £7000 in 1913. Early in the xth century a church was built at Waltham for a cross which possessed miraculous qualities, or was, perhaps, one of the numerous fragments of the True Cross. Toni, who endowed this building and appointed the original priests, having died, it was granted to Harold Godwinson, afterwards the last king of the English. He increased the foundation from two to twelve priests, making it into a college of secular canons; and a new church having been built, it was consecrated by the Archbishop of York in 1060, Edward the Confessor being present. In the time of Henry II. a change took place, sixteen Augustinian canons taking the place of the secular body, and in 1184 it became an abbey. When the Dissolution came, Henry VIII. indicated the intention of making the great monastic church into a cathedral for Essex, but this promise was never fulfilled, and the usual process of destruction proceeded as elsewhere, the nave only being preserved as a parish church for the people of Waltham. Fortunately the abbey gateway has also survived the era of destruction, and seen from a small tributary of the Lea with the abbey church beyond it makes a very

attractive picture. In spite of the modern east end, which faces one on entering the nave, the massive Norman arcades still remain splendid in their simplicity and strength. The columns are grooved with



FRAGMENT OF SCULPTURED BLACK MARBLE IN WALTHAM ABBEY CHURCH, WHICH MAY HAVE FORMED PART OF THE TOMB OR SARCOPHAGUS OF HAROLD II.

spiral lines and a chevron pattern similar to those of Durham and Lindisfarne. After his death at Senlac Hill, Harold's body, having been recognised by his mistress, Edith-of-the-Swan-Neck, was brought for burial to the church of Waltham; but of the tomb in which he was laid nothing has survived beyond a curious sculptured fragment, and even this is open to criticism. If it be

actually part of this early tomb, one can only imagine that a Roman sarcophagus of black marble was found and utilised at this time of national disruption, in the same way as that one of white marble was discovered at Grantcestir (the predecessor of Cambridge) when a more permanent coffin was required for the remains of Aethelthryth, the Abbess of Ely.

About a mile to the west of Waltham Cross is Theobalds Park, where James I. was entertained after leaving Broxbournebury on his way to London. The house was then the magnificent one which had been commenced in 1560 by Lord Burghley, whose son exchanged it for Hatfield. In it James I. died, and there Charles I. lived for a short period. When, however, the Crown lands were sold in 1649, this splendid house was razed to the ground, and to-day there is not a single relic of it to be seen. There is, in spite of this, a feature of the greatest interest at Theobalds. It is the gateway of the park, which is nothing less than Temple Bar re-erected, stone for stone, after the City of London had, with incredible indifference to its historical monuments, decided on its removal in order to facilitate the movement of traffic. Thus Sir Christopher Wren's gateway came down in 1878, but it was not until ten years later that the stones were re-erected at the entrance to this historic park. One day, perchance, an enlightened Corporation of London will decide to bring back and re-erect this fine example of xviiith-century architecture within its boundaries.

CHAPTER IV

NORTH-EASTERN HERTFORDSHIRE AND THE SOUTHERN MARGIN OF THE FENS

BETWEEN the Lea valley and the southern edge of the Fens there is a strip of undulating country which is traversed by two main roads to the north: the Ermine Street passing through Ware and Buntingford, and reaching the lower level at Royston; the other road comes up from Hatfield and, passing through Stevenage, reaches Baldock, where it crosses the Icknield Way to find itself on the edge of the fenny country at Biggleswade.

Hadham. The two villages of Much and Little Hadham are on a by-road leading along the valley of the Ash towards the pretty country on the Essex border. The first village is a little over a mile from the railway station, and is a place of some antiquity, having had a manor-house which became the property of the Bishops of London. Edmund of Hadham, a brother of Henry VI., was born there. The many interesting features of the Early English church include brasses and monuments dating back to 1331. Little Hadham, at the cross-roads to Bishop's Stortford and Standon, is prettily situated, and its church by the stream has an exceptionally good wooden porch, the building as a whole dating from early in the first

A STANDARD FROM PINKIE 87

period of Gothic. Here too there are interesting brasses, and the monument recording the fact that Arthur Lord Capel "was murder'd for his loyalty to King Charles I." should not be overlooked.

Standon. The interesting church has an exceptional feature in its detached tower, and in the chancel is the monument to Sir Ralph Sadleir, one of the family which for many generations owned the manor-house, now destroyed. Sir Ralph fought at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547, when the Protector Somerset inflicted on the Scots a very severe defeat. The knight's effigy shows him in the armour of the period, and by the monument there is an object which causes one a slight indrawing of the breath—for it is nothing less than the pole of a standard which was captured in that bloody fight. It is quite possible that the merciless slaughter of 10,000 Scots delayed the union of the countries for half a century.

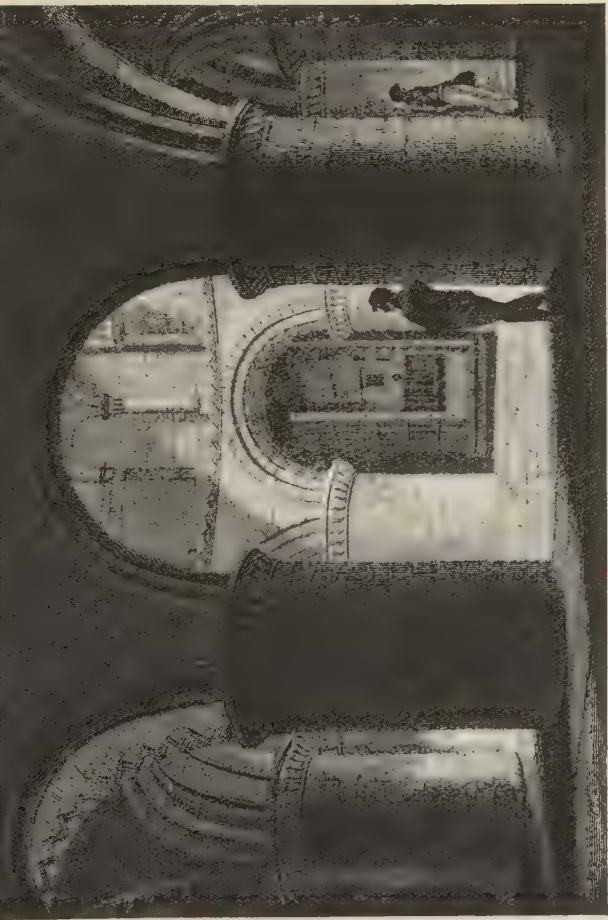
Braughing. This prettily-situated village is interesting on account of its location at Roman cross-roads. The site must have been occupied in some way during the Romano-British period, for besides the existence of earthworks, Roman coins have been found here in considerable numbers, and in addition pottery and a sarcophagus have come to light in the parish.

Buntingford has a terminal station on the branch-line which comes up the valley of the Rib. It has many picturesque cottages, and has an air of antiquity greater than many places with roots that go far deeper into history. Not being

mentioned in Domesday, it appears to have come into existence at some later period, and its church only dates back to the time of James I. This part of Hertfordshire has been since very early times given to much celebration of the first of May. In recent times this recognition of the festival of Spring has degenerated. The Mayers, attired in white smocks, with bright-coloured ribbons tied round their hats, were in the habit of singing during the night and of collecting money throughout the morning, after the fashion of waits.

Knebworth. After Hatfield, when one is considering the great houses of Hertfordshire, Knebworth ranks second in importance. There had been a castle on the site in the Norman period, owned by Eudo Dapifer, but it does not appear to have figured in any way in history at that time. Eventually the property came into the hands of Sir Thomas Bouchier, K.G., and it was he who sold it, in the reign of Henry VII., to Sir Robert Lytton, a Privy Councillor, who commenced a splendid quadrangular building on the site of the Norman stronghold. Generations passed before the great Tudor mansion was completed. To it came Elizabeth to be entertained by Sir Roland Lytton, who received his knighthood from the maiden queen.

Early in the sixteenth century the building was to a large extent demolished by Mrs. Bulwer, whose architect gave the great house its present somewhat over-decorated aspect, but fortunately it retains the banqueting hall of the original house, adorned with an oak screen and wains-



IN THE ROUND CHURCH OF ST. BENEDICT, CAMBRIDGE

It is the oldest of the four circular churches of the Order of Knights Templar still standing in England.

From a drawing by S. Prout engraved by J. C. Smith in 1805.

coting by Inigo Jones. "Queen Elizabeth's Chamber" contains an immense oak bedstead, but whether she ever reposed in it one is not able to state with any confidence. There is also the "Hampden Chamber," where it is known that John Hampden slept. Here Sir William Lytton had a conference with him and others when he threw in his lot with the Parliament in the Great Civil War.¹

In 1843, under the terms of Mrs. Bulwer's will, her son, who had already achieved fame as a novelist, adopted her maiden name of Lytton, and became known as Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. In the same year he published *The Last of the Barons*, which from the historical standpoint will be regarded as the best of all his romances. He had reached the apogee of his renown as a writer in 1834, after the publication of *The Last Days of Pompeii* and *Rienzi*. After a life crowded with work, for he was an active politician as well as a novelist, Bulwer Lytton was raised to the peerage in 1866 as Baron Lytton of Knebworth. He died seven years afterwards at Torquay, on the 18th January, 1873. His son, the first earl, entered the diplomatic service, and was destined to become one of the famous Viceroys of India in Victorian times. He inherited the genius of his father for literature, his success as a poet being perhaps greater than his achievements in the field of diplomacy.

Knebworth Church is rich in monuments to the Lytton family.

¹ See p. 21.

Stevenage. Close to the road on entering Stevenage from the south are the Six Hills—mounds placed at regular intervals—which may belong to the period of the Norse invasions. In 1807 a terrible fire occurred in the village, with the result that when the place was gradually rebuilt the houses were placed along the main road, instead of near the church, which is nearly half a mile distant. If one takes a turning to the east, where the roads to Hitchin and Baldock fork, one comes to the old church. It is a picturesque Early English building, but contains nothing of exceptional interest.

Hitchin. The little town covers a considerable area on ground sloping towards the river Hiz. In the xvth century the place was famed for the vast quantities of malt which it produced, and brewing still remains an important industry. It is an old town, perhaps very old indeed, for not only have Roman objects been discovered, but the neighbourhood has also produced implements of the Palæolithic period. There was a Gilbertine nunnery here, founded in the xiiith century, and parts of it are incorporated in the Biggin Almshouses.

At a corner of the Market Place is the very large parish church, whose tower has an appearance of dwarfness, its area, like that of Beaconsfield, being out of all proportion to its height. Among the interesting features which the building contains are a stone effigy, possibly that of Bernard de Baliol, some early brasses, including one to Nicholas Mattok, who was a merchant of the staple of

Calais, and a vaulted but mutilated south porch. It is worth while to examine the exterior of the tower, in which a number of Roman bricks have been used in the manner so common in the adjoining county of Essex.

Baldock. The old town of Baldock is on the Icknield Way, which here runs at the foot of the Hertfordshire hills in a north-easterly direction. In between it and Hitchin is the garden city estate of Letchworth, which begins to show signs of becoming a very pleasant combination of ideal factories, with well-designed cottages and small houses, each with ample garden space.

The broad main street of Baldock possesses almshouses endowed by one of the Wynnes, and some of the cottage architecture, with very steep thatched roofs, adds a great deal of picturesqueness to the place. A fine Perpendicular church, containing a XIIIth-century font and interesting brasses as well as a great range of rood-screen, is the chief interest of the town. An indication of the general state of insecurity in this part of the country in the XVth century is to be found at Bygrave, a village two or three miles to the north of Baldock, where the manor-house was moated by Sir John Thornbury in order to protect himself against robbers.

It is not too well known that the Rev. John Smith, who was afterwards rector of Baldock from 1819 to 1822, deciphered the shorthand MS. of *Pepys' Diary* which was used in the first edition published by Lord Braybrooke; who, however, on account of his desire to avoid the

publication of all episodes and phrases likely to offend the taste of mid-Victorian society, cut down the original transcript very drastically. The excisions amounted approximately to a third of the whole.

Ashwell. The village is down in the lower levels about two miles from the Icknield Way, and is a place suggesting considerable antiquity on account of its possessing old entrenchments, which may belong to Romano-British times. They are known as Arbury Banks, and are to be found on a knoll on the south side of the village. Roman coins and other objects have been found in the district.

The church is remarkable for the graffiti incised upon the interior of the walls of the tower, which is built of the fairly hard cretaceous stone known as clunch. The surface of this stone encourages the cutting of inscriptions, and at the same time preserves them. Among the different writings and inscriptions there is a remarkable representation of old St. Paul's Cathedral, covering two of the blocks at a height of about five feet from the floor; that it was drawn before the great thunder-storm of 1561 is fairly clear from the fact that the spire destroyed in that year is shown in the graffito. If this be so, the roughly-cut outline is the oldest known representation of the St. Paul's which existed before the Great Fire.

Higher up this wall are three lines of Latin which have been very well preserved. Translated, they run as follows:

1350. Wretched, terrible destructive year. The remnants of the people alone remain in evidence. Finally, in the

second pestilence there was a great storm. In this year Maurus thundered throughout the world. 1361.

It is known that a great gale swept over the country on St. Maur's Day (15th January), 1361, in which year the plague was also very prevalent.

Royston is a small town which has grown up since the Middle Ages at the point where Ermine Street and the Icknield Way cross one another. It appears that a cross was set up at this junction of the roads by Lady Rohesia, the pious spouse of the Norman lord who owned the district. Crosses worked marvels in the minds of wayfarers in pre-Reformation times, and the existence of one at this point was doubtless comforting to all those who feared the power of evil influences as they passed along the great Roman highway. In the xiith century a house of Black Canons (Augustinians) was founded at this place under the name "*Monasterium de Cruce Roesiae*," and if there had been no town here before, it would then have grown up around the religious house. Nothing remains of either the cross or the monastery, but a curious discovery was made in 1742, when, under a street in the town, a hermit's cave cut out of the chalk was brought to light. On its walls were rough carvings of the Crucifixion and other religious subjects. The church which stood close to the priory was purchased by the parish at the Dissolution, and contains monuments and brasses of the xvth and xviith centuries. There are recollections of James I. in the town, for he halted here on his historic journey to London in 1603.

Meldreth and Melbourn. The village of Mel-

bourn, picturesque with thatch, an old church, and quaint inn signs, is three miles north of Royston, where Cambridgeshire assumes its fenny aspect, the country to the north being level and green to the far-off horizons.

CHAPTER V

CAMBRIDGE AND NEWMARKET

ALTHOUGH the river upon which Cambridge stands is comparatively insignificant, it has been used to the fullest extent to adorn the grounds of the colleges. The Cam has, indeed, been more taken into the intimacy of the colleges than has the greater river at Oxford. The town is still a small one; it has a sleepy atmosphere suggestive of some of the smaller cathedral cities, and how could it be otherwise when the situation of Cambridge is realised; for here one is off the great streams of modern life in the southern portion of Fenland. Except in winter, the charm of the surroundings of the colleges is a perpetual delight to those who know them well. The visitor more often than not sees them during the height of summer, when the lawns of "the Backs," closely shaven and sloping gently to the river bank, are bordered by flowers, and the dignified groups of collegiate buildings beyond are shaded by masses of foliage, the succession of beautiful groupings creating impressions which are ineffaceable.

During the Roman period the town appears to have been called *Camboritum*, and it stood at the point where Akeman Street crossed *Via Devana*, the Roman highway running between

Colchester (Camulodunum) and Godmanchester. At various times in the past the Roman site was supposed to have been at the village of Grantchester, about two miles to the south, but this name is a corruption of Grantceta or Grancete, whereas the English name of Camboritum, which stood at Roman cross-roads, was Grantaceastir, and gradually became known, after a bridge had been built, as Grantabrycg, from which comes the present name of Cambridge. One can picture a walled town here, probably left ruinous after the full impact of the English invasion had been felt. In time the place became a commercial centre, and had grown into being a town of some consequence before the Conquest. It may have been then that the famous Stourbridge Fair was established, and Æthelred the Redeless placed a mint there. In 1010 Cambridge was sacked for the second time by the Vikings, and after the Conquest a Norman castle was built, under whose protection the town grew and flourished. The mound upon which the keep stood remains to-day, and in such walls as still exist Roman bricks are incorporated.

Up to this time there does not appear any indication of monastery or school in Cambridge, but great abbeys were growing in the north, at Ely, at Peterborough, at Crowland, at Ramsey and elsewhere, with the result that in time the little town on the Cam began to be colonised by small groups of canons and friars, in whose hostels young monks from the abbeys received the beginnings of their education. Certainly the site



Photochrom Co.

"THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS," ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

This is one of the most beautiful of the smaller features
of Cambridge.

of Cambridge would have been a healthier one than any of the abbeys situated in the heart of Fenland, at that period to a great extent undrained.

Not until 1284 was the first college established on an academic basis; Hugh de Balsham, Bishop of Ely, was the founder, and the college was known as Peterhouse. The bishop had discovered himself in trouble in settling the difficulties between the secular and religious elements among the canons of St. John's Hospital, which was afterwards to become the college. He therefore removed the Ely clerks or lay scholars to two hostels at the other end of the town, and when he died bequeathed the sum of 300 marks wherewith to provide a hall in which his scholars could meet and dine. Thus was founded the first college of the University of Cambridge.

It was not until the first quarter of the following century was well-nigh spent that the second college made its appearance. It was called Michael House, and was followed during the next twenty-five years by Clare in 1326, King's Hall in 1337, Pembroke in 1347, Gonville Hall in 1348, Trinity Hall in 1350, and Corpus Christi in 1352. After this rapid growth of colleges there came a gap of not far short of a century, when a fresh period of founding began, King's College coming into existence in 1441, and others following until St. John's became a college in 1509. Magdalene and Sidney Sussex also belong to the xvth century, and this closes the third period of college founding. There is, besides those mentioned, a fourth group belonging to recent times.

The one building which it is impossible to miss even if one's visit is extremely brief is the glorious Perpendicular chapel of King's College, which ranks with St. George's Chapel at Windsor and the Lady Chapel built by Henry VII. at Westminster as one of the three most perfect structures of the style in the world. Perpendicular Gothic had reached its greatest moment; the architects who undertook stone-vaulted roofs were also engineers, for they could construct walls which were nearly all glass and roof them with traceried stonework of such exquisite delicacy, and with such apparent disregard of the crushing weight of the stone of which they were composed, that one is compelled to admiration. Here at Cambridge the lines of the fan tracery of the vault are quite perfect, the fine curves of the groining ascending with exquisite grace, like the leaves of a palm, from corbels placed half-way up the height of the windows. The roof has not the complexity of its rivals, there being no pendent bosses which form such a conspicuous feature at Westminster, and yet the thrust produced by the enormous weight of this roof required buttresses without of very great strength. Had they been planned by any brain less skilled they would, doubtless, have given something of the aspect of Eton College Chapel, which seems to be as over-buttressed as any structure one can find, short of the north aisle of St. David's Cathedral. By placing a chapel between each bay of the buttresses their lowest and most massive portions are completely screened as at Westminster, and above, where they meet

the eye, they are so skilfully reduced as they rise to their crocketed pinnacles that few who were unaware of the fact would hazard the smallest sum on the existence of a stone roof. The windows are filled with glass executed between 1516 and 1526, and they rank with those of Fairford as forming one of the most complete series of mediæval windows to be found in the country. One is not surprised that Wordsworth should have fallen into raptures over the building, which he called a "glorious work of fine intelligence," and goes on to write of:

These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loath to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

The choir is cut off from the rest of the chapel by a very fine oak screen, erected in 1536. It bears the monogram of Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn entwined with true lovers' knots—a somewhat startling fact when one realises that in that same year the unfortunate queen went to the scaffold under the charge of unfaithfulness.

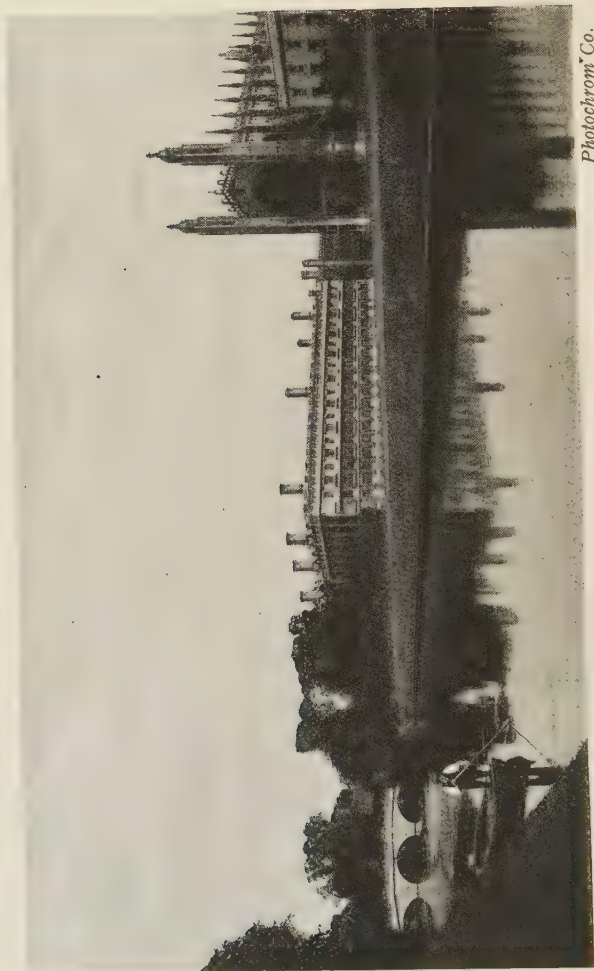
The great court at Trinity College is the most spacious quadrangle possessed by any college, and cannot fail to impress all comers as being something unique. The foundation of Trinity College on this large scale was due to Henry VIII., who, in order to find the necessary space, dissolved Michael House and King's Hall, two very early colleges, and in addition seven small hostels were

swept away, and even the lane which separated the two old foundations just mentioned. The beautiful Tudor gateway dates from 1535, and the chapel was commenced by Queen Mary and completed in the reign of her sister Elizabeth. Many distinguished names are associated with this famous college, among them those of Newton, Macaulay and Tennyson.

St. John's College was founded by Lady Margaret Beaufort and her executor, John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. The three quadrangles of time-worn red brick, suggestive of Hampton Court, lead to the river bank, which is crossed by that exquisite feature of Cambridge known popularly as "The Bridge of Sighs." It is covered and its sides are Perpendicular arcades supporting battlemented parapets. The range of dark red buildings, whose foundations rise from the pellucid waters of the Cam in which they are reflected, is one of the most pleasing and richly-coloured features of the college "backs."

Bishop Fisher had intended that his fine collection of books, "the notablest library of books in all England, two long galleries full," should come to St. John's, but his refusal to accept Henry VIII. as supreme head of the Church brought him to the scaffold in 1535, and thus the books never reached his college. In spite of this the library is rich in *incunabula*, including early examples of printing by Caxton.

Peterhouse, which has already been mentioned as the earliest college, contains scarcely any indication of its original buildings, but when the



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CLARE COLLEGE AND BRIDGE, CAMBRIDGE

On the right is the famous Perpendicular Chapel of King's College.

xvth-century quadrangle was handed over to the tender mercy of James Essex, the Georgian architect, he fortunately did not touch the garden side of the southern wing, and thus the hall and combination room have been preserved and remain one of the very beautiful mediæval survivals of the university. It was Bishop Matthew Wren who built the present chapel in 1632. The interior is panelled in dark oak, and the light streams through a very fine Flemish east window.

Clare College is the second oldest foundation since Michael House was destroyed. The beautiful lawn, sloping to the river, is here spanned by a stone bridge of three arches, whose silvery whiteness is a delicious contrast to the trees and grass adjoining. This bridge appears to date from the middle of the xviith century, when a good deal of reconstruction took place, necessitated by a fire which had occurred some time earlier. Clare was founded by Elizabeth de Burgh, a daughter of Gilbert de Clare, in 1342, but of the buildings erected at that time nothing remains.

Pembroke College was brought into being by the widow of Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, whose tomb is one of the beautiful triad in the sanctuary of Westminster Abbey. The chapel was designed by Sir Christopher Wren in 1667.

Of Caius College a conspicuous and beautiful feature is the Gate of Honour, facing Senate House Passage. This college was known as Gonville Hall until Dr. Caius reformed it in 1557. It was the good doctor's idea, when he to all intents and purposes rebuilt Gonville, to provide three gate-

ways, the first that of Humility, the second of Virtue, and the third of Honour. Only the last exists.

Queens' College has a court named after Erasmus, who, it seems, was advised to go there by Bishop Fisher. Letters written by Erasmus when he was at Queens' contain many interesting passages. In one he complains of the bad wine and beer which he was obliged to drink when his usual cask of best Greek wine failed to reach him from his friend Ammonius. Not only has this college an entrance gateway of red brick, which is the best of this type in Cambridge, but its courts are exceedingly picturesque. The west front of the inner one, with its oriel windows and rough-cast walls overhanging the cloisters, is as pleasing as anything of its character in the whole length of the "backs."

St. Catherine's College was dedicated to "the Glorious Virgin Martyr, St. Catherine of Alexandria," but by the undergraduate this dignified title is reduced to "Cat's." It is one of the smallest of the colleges, and, although possessing a less ecclesiastical character than Corpus, quite a number of bishops have completed their education there.

Bishop Alcock of Ely was the founder of Jesus College in 1497. It has a xvth-century entrance gate, and an outer court which, although completed in the xviiith century, was begun in the time of Charles I. The Benedictine nunnery, whose buildings were incorporated into the new college, survives in the chapel and the inner court, which was the cloister of the nunnery. Some of the

windows in the chapel contain stained glass by William Morris and Burne-Jones, and although the tracery is Perpendicular, the building as a whole is Early English. Another of the gateways constructed in red brick, which are such a notable feature of Cambridge, is that of Christ's College, re-founded by Lady Margaret Beaufort in 1505. In the Fellows' Garden one may still see the mulberry tree associated with John Milton.

Magdalene College stands between the river and the Norman castle, and is of very special interest on account of the preservation in the library of the collection of books which Pepys presented to his old college. Here one may see the volumes in the order he liked to keep them, arranged according to size and standing in the glass-doored bookcases in which they had stood during his lifetime. His famous diary is also preserved here, and those who desire to do so may see the large volumes written with the greatest neatness in the shorthand which he adopted in order to secure privacy for all the personal, and often unprintable, things that he put down.

Besides the colleges, the university possesses many other buildings of interest, including the Library, the Senate House and the museums.

Of the churches of Cambridge, the most remarkable is that commonly known as the "Round Church." It is the oldest of the four surviving churches of the Order of Knights Templar still standing in England, which were built in circular form in imitation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. The other three, in the

order of their antiquity, are the Temple Church in London, St. Sepulchre's at Northampton, and Little Maplestead ¹ in Essex. The massively-built arcade, consisting of eight columns, supporting plain semicircular arches, has above it a triforium of similar character, but with each arch subdivided by a light pillar carrying two smaller arches. Above is a clerestory lighted by deeply splayed round-headed slits.

Older than this circular church is St. Benedict's, whose tower links Cambridge with pre-Norman days. For a considerable time this was the chapel of Corpus Christi College, which it adjoins.

Yet another old church is that of St. Peter, which stands on the opposite side of the street to the castle. Its style is Transitional Norman, and Roman bricks appear in its walls. One could write much of the university church were there space available, but those who wish to learn its story and the reason why the pulpit is placed on rails so that it can be drawn to a central position when required, must be referred to books which are devoted exclusively to the town and university.

If one leave Cambridge late in the afternoon on a summer day, when the shadows are lengthening across the lawns of the college gardens, it is with the greatest reluctance that one tears oneself away from the scene of such exquisite beauty, where a variety of architecture from the Middle Ages up to the XVIIIth century is set among gracious lawns shaded by dignified groups of

¹ For a description of Little Maplestead see *Through East Anglia*, a volume uniform with this.

trees whose great branches droop towards the waters of the slow-moving river.

Newmarket. A dozen miles east of Cambridge is the town of Newmarket, a name which, like Epsom, spells horse-racing and little else. The famous racecourse is on Newmarket Heath, some three miles nearer to Cambridge than the town. Horse-racing began to take place there in the time of James I., in whose reign this form of sport grew greatly in favour as a popular amusement. Elizabeth does not appear to have patronised the racecourse, and in her time the sport seems not to have been at all in fashion. An alteration came, however, with her successor, "Jamie" finding much pleasure in racing as a change from hunting. He built himself a house at Newmarket in order that he could enjoy both forms of sport: races took place there as early as the year 1605. By the time Charles I. had come to the throne, the racing of horses had become more and more popular, and Charles instituted the first cup race there, bells being thereafter abandoned. In 1667 a stand-house was built, and from that year onwards racing has taken place at Newmarket annually. The full length of the course is four miles. It cuts through the famous Devil's Ditch, also known as St. Edmund's Dyke, an immense earthwork eighteen feet above the ordinary ground level, and thirty feet from the bottom of the ditch to the top of the mound. Its precise age is difficult to determine, but there seems little doubt that at one time it formed the boundary between East Anglia and Mercia.

CHAPTER VI

ALONG THE RIVER OUSE

FROM its source in Northamptonshire the Great Ouse takes a sinuous course through Bedfordshire, forming great loops as it approaches the town of Bedford and assuming a slightly more direct character as it nears its confluence with the Ivel, which drains the southern half of the county. Between Bedford and St. Ives the broad valley becomes wider with every mile until, after the latter place, it ceases to appear as a valley at all, its course being through the broad levels of Fenland. As far as a few miles below Huntingdon the scenery is often beautified by the woods which approach the banks, and the landscapes, with the silvery green of whispering willows in the foreground and grazing cattle in the rich water meadows, are often as pleasing as anything of their character in the country.

Biggleswade. In the centre of a plain noted for market gardening is the old town of Biggleswade, which grew up into a prosperous little borough town under the control of the Bishops of Lincoln, to whom it was granted by Henry I. as part of the endowment of the cathedral. The church has been very much rebuilt and is now mainly Late Perpendicular, with a tower dating from 1720.

The brasses mentioned in earlier records have unfortunately disappeared, including the greater part of that to John Ruding, Archdeacon of Bedford, who died in 1481, and was responsible for the rebuilding of the chancel.

An ancient road known as the Stane Way came through the town from Baldock on its way to Godmanchester, where it joined the Ermine Street.

Sandy. This extensive village, like Biggleswade, is on the Ivel, which within a mile or two pours its waters into the Great Ouse. The old spelling of the name was Salndy, but in spite of this, doubt has been thrown on the old opinion that it was the Roman *Salinae* mentioned by Ptolemy. Both Chesterfield and Galley Hill possess Roman camps, and at the former site Samian pottery, a bronze mirror, fibulæ and many Roman coins have been found. An oval area of some thirty acres, known as Cæsar's Camp, bears no indication of Roman origin or occupation, and may therefore be regarded as of earlier date. Near the Roman camp on Galley Hill there were found in 1881 several leaden coffins of the Romano-British period.

In Sandy church is the marble monument of Captain Sir William Peel, R.N., K.C.B., the third son of Sir Robert Peel, whose "death in the midst of success and honours was lamented as a national loss." He gained the Victoria Cross when in command of a battery at Sebastopol, and during the Indian Mutiny, when captain of H.M.S. *Shannon*, he organised and led the naval brigade which hauled the ship's 68-pounders the whole distance from Calcutta to Lucknow. He was wounded at the

taking of the Martinière during the final capture of that town on the 27th April, 1858.

He unwittingly contracted small-pox by travelling down to Cawnpore in an infected dhooly, having refused to occupy a stage carriage which his sailors had upholstered for him. On the 19th he dined with Lieutenant Roberts (afterwards Field-Marshal Lord) and appeared to be perfectly well, but on the next morning was in a high fever, which an army surgeon diagnosed as small-pox, of which the gallant sailor died.

A couple of miles to the south-west of Sandy is the little village of Northill, a pleasant old place with a church of dark red sandstone dating from Perpendicular times. The memorials to the Harveys and others are interesting, particularly the brass to Sir Nicholas Harvey, who died in 1533. He was a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Henry VIII., furnished a joust at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and was sent on an embassy to the Emperor Charles V. His death occurred at Ampthill while attending Henry VIII. during his visit to Catherine of Aragon. It was the year in which the sentence of the nullity of the union with Catherine was promulgated, and on the 10th August Henry made the proclamation forbidding her the title of queen; to which, however, Catherine steadfastly refused to give her consent, being determined not to take the title of princess dowager. Previously she had been a prisoner at Hatfield, and about this time was removed to the moated palace of the bishops of Lincoln, the ruins of which still stand in the centre of the village of Buckden, about four

miles south-west of Huntingdon, and there she remained surrounded by spies, with her household much reduced, until she was removed to Kimbolton.

Tempsford. This place appears in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as Taemesse-forda and sometimes Temsford, suggesting that the name has the same basis as Thames. In 921 it was taken by the forces of Edward the Elder. In the words of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle:

They beset the town and fought thereon; until they broke into it, and slew the king and Earl Toglas, and Earl Mann his son, and his brother, and all them that were therein and who were resolved to defend it.

This was a forlorn hope of the Northmen of the Danelaw to resist the steady advance of Edward the Elder.

Less than a century later the tables were turned once more when Sweyn "Forkbeard" effected the conquest of England from Æthelred the Redeless. When his Danes were ravaging the valley of the Ouse in 1010 on their way back to their ships laden with spoil, it is mentioned that they came to Bedford "and so forth to Temsford, always burning as they went." This wholesale destruction is typical of what happened throughout the marches of the Viking forces, as a rule along river valleys, and it would almost appear from the tragic record of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that more catastrophic damage was caused by the Danes than during the English invasions in the vth and vith centuries. It is an interesting question which will

not be cleared up until a great deal of additional archæological work has contributed its support to the meagre pages of history.

St. Neots. The quaint little town of St. Neots was formerly known as St. Needs or St. Notes, and derives its name from Neotus Æthelstane, who was, according solely to the Chronicle of St. Neots, the eldest brother of Alfred the Great, who is said to have entered the Abbey of Glastonbury when heir-apparent to the throne. Later he became a hermit near Bodmin, where he died towards the end of the ixth century. Alfred, according to this chronicle, had the greatest affection for his eldest brother and found in him a most excellent counsellor. In course of time a monastery was founded at Eynesbury, which is now almost united with St. Neots, in which was placed a shrine containing the saint's remains. Here they remained until the Danes threatened the place, when it was thought safer to send the relics to Crowland Abbey in Lincolnshire, of which St. Neot became one of the patron saints. It has been suggested that the portrait on what is known as the Alfred Jewel,¹ which was found at Athelney in Somersetshire, is that of St. Neot, but lack of evidence makes it impossible to determine the question. The whole question as to the ancestry of St. Neots is obscure in the extreme. It is not even certain whether Æthelstane was the brother of Alfred, he was quite as likely his uncle. Asser, the one writer who had personal knowledge of Alfred, and who gives intimate details of his life,

¹ In the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford.

CONCERNING HOLY RELICS III

makes no mention whatever of the influence, or even the existence, of this shadowy personality. It may be that the brethren of the monastery used their inventive faculties somewhat freely after the manner of the monkish "historians" of the Middle Ages.

The first bridge over the river, which is navigable from here to its mouth at King's Lynn, was probably built soon after the endowment of the monastery. It was either repaired or rebuilt in 1388, and two centuries later, some time after the Dissolution, the existing bridge of stone took the place of its predecessor. How the early monastery dedicated to St. Neot obtained possession of the remains of Alfred's saintly brother is not known, but it has been suggested that the bones were stolen by the monks in order to give a certain popularity to the new foundation. The stealing of relics of the saints was not beneath the standard of morals of the ecclesiastics of the Middle Ages. It is recorded that the keeper of the altars of martyrdom in Canterbury Cathedral was bribed by the monastery of St. Augustine with an offer of the abbacy itself if he would bring with him a piece of St. Thomas's skull. And the inducement succeeded!

Re-founded in 1079, the Monastery of St. Neot became a Benedictine Priory, of which nothing whatever remains to-day. After the Dissolution, the buildings, farm and other lands were given by Henry VIII. to Richard Williams, afterwards Sir Richard Cromwell of Hinchbrook, who profited enormously from this and other gifts

of the same nature. By the year 1814 only an arch of the gatehouse existed, and this last small vestige of the historic priory was destroyed in that year. In the Perpendicular church there was kept for five centuries a manuscript, known as the Chronicle of St. Neots, in which, among many other interesting stories, one finds that of Alfred and the cakes, which appears to have been written in the xth century.

Offord and Buckden. Road, river and railway all run close together where the two villages of Offord Cluney and Offord d'Arcy stand close together on the main road to Huntingdon. The latter possesses an interesting xiiith-century church, but a greater interest is to be found two miles to the west at Buckden, which has already been mentioned in connection with Catherine of Aragon. The village is on the Great North Road, and it still retains extensive and picturesque ruins of the episcopal palace, which was for a short time the scene of the unfortunate queen's imprisonment. The gateway is a fine example of xvth-century brickwork, with the arms of Bishop Russell, who occupied Buckden in 1480, shown on the walls.

About six miles further west is Kimbolton Castle, to which Catherine was removed from Buckden, and where she died on the 8th January, 1536. During the last three years of her life she took constant precautions against the possibility of being poisoned, but although there were suggestions that her demise had been brought about by such means, there is no evidence in support of

the idea. She passed these years of seclusion in religious devotion, having been inclined in that direction throughout her life. In appearance the queen, who was then nearly fifty years of age, was described as "rather ugly than otherwise; of low stature and rather stout." But that she was a cultured woman of considerable education there is little doubt, Erasmus having commented on her scholarship and her knowledge of the Bible. The extraordinary fortitude which she showed during the entirely unmerited ill-treatment meted out to her by her husband shows her to have been a woman of fine character. It is a notable fact that she had the necessary courage to give her sympathy to Wolsey after his fall.

Katherine. Sir, I most humbly pray you to deliver
This to my lord the king.

Capucius. Most willing, madam.

.

Katherine. I thank you, honest lord. Remember me
In all humility unto his highness:
Say, his long trouble now is passing
Out of this world: tell him, in death I bless'd him,
For so I will.—Mine eyes grow dim.—Farewell,
My Lord.—Griffith, farewell. . . .

King Henry VIII., Act IV. Sc. ii.

Half a century later, only some fifteen miles to the north,¹ another queen, Mary Stuart, was to end her days in imprisonment, not by natural causes, but at the hands of an executioner, acting under the orders of Henry VIII.'s daughter by the woman who had supplanted Catherine.

¹ See Fotheringay, pp. 136-140.

Godmanchester. This place stood at a great meeting of roads during the Roman period, and probably was so situated throughout Celtic times. It was a natural point for the crossing of the Ouse and, before the existence of a bridge, would doubtless have had its ferry. The Ermine Street passed through it, carried over the river by a bridge, across which would have gone a great part of the movement between London and York. All sorts and conditions of traffic used this important arterial thoroughfare, from the military reliefs and supplies on their way to the great base of the Sixth Legion at Eboracum (York) and the horse-litters of the wealthy, to the itinerant pedlar, whose goods would be attractive in the homesteads scattered along the great highway to the north.

Quantities of Roman coins have been found on the site of the town, the name of which appears to be a corruption of Guthmund's-chester, the old spelling being Gudmuncestre. It was at one time generally accepted that Godmanchester was the Roman Durolipons, but latterly there has been a tendency to regard this as doubtful.¹ I am inclined to adhere to the older view, finding the weight of evidence in its favour.

The bridge repaired in 1637 by Robert Cooke is still standing and, near it, is one of those large and picturesque timber water-mills for which the Ouse is famous.

¹ In his communication to the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, Vol. XIV., the Rev. F. G. Walker, M.A., accepts Godmanchester as Durolipons.

The Perpendicular church has a tower dating from the xviiith century, the stone of which it is built having been obtained from the ruins of Ramsey Abbey.

Huntingdon. The county town of Huntingdon is, like Godmanchester, on the Ermine Street, but whether it was the site of any former entrenched or fortified station is not known. There are earth-works not far from the bridge, which Camden thought were the remains of the fortress built by Edward the Elder.

It is an interesting fact that through his marriage with Matilda, the widow of Simon de St. Liz, David I., King of Scotland, became Earl of Huntingdon, and also acquired extensive territories in Northumberland.

There was an Augustinian Priory at Huntingdon which had been founded in the xth century by King Edgar. Probably on account of the attacks upon him by William the Lion, who inherited the lands of Huntingdon from David I., Henry II. caused the castle to be razed to the ground. At the Dissolution, the monastic buildings came to Sir Richard Cromwell, who appears to have destroyed them, as he did those of the monastery at St. Neots. St. Mary's Church, built shortly before 1620, now stands on the site. Greater interest attaches to the church in the Market-place, which is dedicated to All Saints, for although rebuilt almost exactly a century earlier, and from the archæological standpoint not of exceptional interest, it contains in its registers the entry recording the baptism of Oliver Crom-

well, who was the great-grandson of the Sir Richard Cromwell just mentioned. Against the entry someone wrote the comment, now scored out: "England's Plague for 5 Years." The grammar school, standing close to this church, has had among its more famous pupils Cromwell and Pepys. Incorporated in the present buildings are the remains of St. John's Hospital, which David I. of Scotland founded.

The actual house in which Cromwell was born no longer stands. Its site in the High Street is now occupied by Hinchingsbrooke House.

The poet Cowper lived with the Unwins from 1765 until the death of his host, Mr. Morley Unwin, in 1767, in a house still standing in the High Street. Cowper had come as a boarder, and everything went well until Mr. Unwin died as the result of a fall from his horse.

Being on the Great North Road, Huntingdon could not fail to require good hotels in coaching days, and one of these, "The George," is fortunate in having preserved its old-time courtyard. The bridge, too, is a valuable possession of the town; it is one of the few existing in England which date back to the xivth century, and has, fortunately, not yet been robbed of its picturesqueness.

Immediately to the west of the town is the park of Hinchingsbrooke House, which replaced a Benedictine nunnery¹ when, after the Dissolution, it came into the ready hands of Richard Williams, a nephew of the terrible Thomas Cromwell—

¹ Portions of the mediæval religious house are incorporated in the Elizabethan structure.



Photochrom Co.

THE COURTYARD OF "THE GEORGE" AT HUNTINGDON
It is a fine example of a coaching inn of the Great North Road.

Henry's vicar-general. Williams adopted the surname of his uncle, was knighted by Henry VIII., and his descendant in the fourth generation was the Great Protector. Here he built the stately Tudor house, in which Elizabeth was entertained by his son Sir Oliver Cromwell in 1564. During that historic journey when James VI. of Scotland was on his way to London to become the first king of Great Britain, he was entertained by Sir Oliver Cromwell, who was the uncle and also godfather of the Protector. His extravagance and profuse hospitality resulted in such a depleted purse that he was eventually compelled to dispose of his magnificent seat, retiring to a property at Ramsey, further to the north, where he died during the Commonwealth period at the ripe age of ninety-three. The mansion was bought by Sir Sydney Montagu, from whom it has come down to the present owner, the ninth Earl of Sandwich.

The five or six miles of river scenery between Huntingdon and St. Ives are full of charm, notwithstanding the fact that the country is so level. At Houghton a very beautiful water-mill stands astride the river, and its picturesqueness has been a magnet to painters for many years past. The villages of Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Grey are within a half-mile from one another on the south bank, and with their churches close to the water-side, add very much to the picture-making qualities of the scenery. The first-mentioned church has interesting paintings on its nave roof, and that of Hemingford Grey is partially

Norman and Early English. Its truncated spire was the result of a storm in 1741. The Manor House possesses walls belonging to the Norman period, a feature which places it in a very small group of buildings which have been continuously inhabited since that early period. In this ancient mansion were born the two sisters, the Misses Gunning, whose beauty took society by storm in the reign of George II.

In the same year these penniless but well-connected Irish girls achieved marriages which are frequently described as romantic — Maria, the elder, to the sixth Earl of Coventry, and Elizabeth to the sixth Duke of Hamilton. That such dazzlingly beautiful sisters whose parentage entitled them to move in the highest circles of Georgian society should have married an earl whose conceit and bad manners had gained for him general dislike, and a duke who was noted as a *roué* and whose excesses had destroyed his health while still in his teens, cannot be regarded as romantic. Within two years of his marriage the duke was dead.

Horace Walpole, writing to Sir Horace Mann, in a letter dated the 18th of June, 1751, says:

You, who knew England in other times, will find it difficult to conceive what indifference reigns with regard to ministers and their squabbles. The two Miss Gunnings are twenty times more the subject of conversation than the two brothers and Lord Granville. These are two Irish girls, of no fortune, who are declared the handsomest women alive. I think their being two so handsome, and both such perfect figures, is their chief excellence, for, singly, I have

seen much handsomer women than either; however, they can't walk in the Park, or go to Vauxhall, but such crowds follow them, that they are generally driven away.

It is said that George II.¹ actually provided an escort of guardsmen to keep off the crowd when the two girls went out walking, and in another letter Horace Walpole tells of the circumstances of Elizabeth's midnight wedding:

About six weeks ago, Duke Hamilton, the very reverse of the Earl, hot, debauched, extravagant, and equally damaged in his fortune and person, fell in love with the youngest at the masquerade, and determined to marry her in the spring. About a fortnight since, at an immense assembly at my Lord Chesterfield's, made to show the house, which is really most magnificent, Duke Hamilton made violent love at one end of the room, while he was playing at Pharaoh at the other end; that is, he saw neither the bank nor his own cards, which were of three hundred pounds each: he soon lost a thousand. I own I was so little a professor in love, that I thought all this parade looked ill for the poor girl; and could not conceive, if he was so much engaged with his mistress as to disregard such sums, why he played at all. However, two nights afterwards, being left alone with her, while her mother and sister were at Bedford House, he found himself so impatient, that he sent for a parson. The doctor refused to perform the ceremony without licence or ring: the Duke swore he would send for the Archbishop: at last they were married with a ring of the bed-curtain,²

¹ I have not yet discovered the authority for this statement.

² Walpole was probably writing with a careless pen when he added this highly unlikely detail.

at half-an-hour after twelve at night, at Mayfair Chapel. The Scotch are enraged; the women mad that so much beauty has had its effect; and, what is more silly, my Lord Coventry declares now that he will marry the other.

It was the notorious clergyman, Alexander Keith, who married the duke to the fair Elizabeth Gunning in the chapel in which he united some six thousand persons annually.

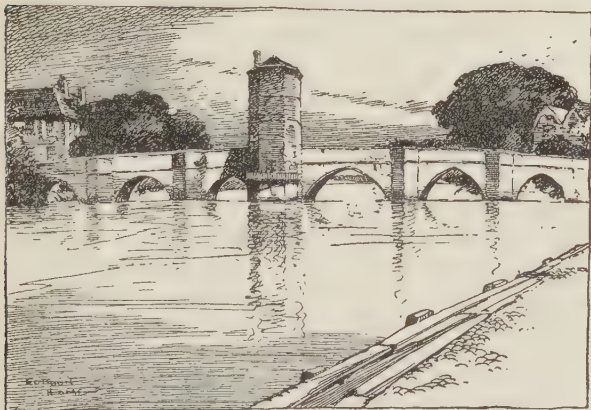
St. Ives. This half-forgotten little town is charmingly placed at a bend of the Ouse, and its church, with a tall tower and spire, rises gracefully above a group of poplars, beautifully placed by the river-side, in whose surface the picture is reversed.

On calm Sunday evenings, when the hour of the services in the surrounding village churches is approaching, the sound of the bells is graded away into the distance so that one almost realises a perspective of sound with the bells of St. Ives in the foreground. Listened to in this manner there is a sweetness and a mellowness about these old bells of Huntingdonshire which is particularly pleasing. There are, indeed, few places in England where so many carillons can be heard pealing at the same time as here in the great stretch of Fenland.

St. Ives has preserved four of the six arches of its xvth-century bridge, in the centre of which stands the chapel, now supporting a plain superstructure of brick, added shortly after the fire which destroyed the upper part of the house in 1689, when a great part of the town was also consumed. The place is not on that account without picturesqueness in its streets, quaint corners

meeting one here and there, especially near the market house. One of the inns bears that most curious of names, "The Spare Rib."

The house in which Oliver Cromwell lived at St. Ives was known as Slepe Hall; alas, it exists no longer, having been pulled down in 1848, and



THE XVTH-CENTURY BRIDGE AT ST. IVES

To the chapel in the centre the tower-like superstructure was added after 1689.

now one finds a "Cromwell Terrace" occupying the site.

One of the most quaint bequests to be found in England is that of Dr. Robert Wild who, at his death in 1678, bequeathed a sum of money, from the interest on which six Bibles were to be purchased annually, and six boys and six girls of the town were to cast dice for the possession of these Bibles every Whit Tuesday on the altar

of the church. Strange as it may seem, this dice-throwing on the altar continued until comparatively recent times, when its unseemliness caused it to be carried out on a small table placed in the chancel for the purpose.

The name St. Ives replaced the original designation of the town, which was Slepe some time after the compilation of Domesday Book, where the old appellation appears. The use of Slepe was not actually abandoned until Tudor times, although St. Ives began to take its place no doubt when the Abbey of Ramsey obtained possession of the town. It was given out that a ploughman had accidentally discovered the remains of St. Ivo, said to be an obscure "Persian" noble, who came to England as a missionary. The name, however, suggests with greater probability Norman or perhaps Breton origin. In the year 1001 the bones were conveyed to Ramsey with much ceremony, and a few years afterwards the site of their supposed discovery at St. Ives was enclosed within a church, afterwards made a priory, where Benedictine monks from Ramsey were established. The house continued as an offshoot of Ramsey until it was dissolved by Henry VIII., who granted it to Sir Thomas Audley.

Somersham. Within two miles of the Ouse, on a patch of land slightly raised above the dead level of the fens, is the village of Somersham. It is dominated by its Early English church, and was at one time a place of some consequence on account of its having been chosen by the bishops of Ely for the erection of a palace. When the first buildings

were erected is not known, but it was certainly prior to 1337, when Bishop John Hotham died there. It became Crown property after the Dissolution, and was included in the jointure of Henrietta Maria. One wing only of the palace was standing in the xviiith century, but this was demolished by the Duke of Manchester.

CHAPTER VII

THE ISLE OF ELY

THE Isle of Ely is a geographical term covering a large area of Fenland between Peterborough and the Ouse; Ely itself being on its south-eastern boundary and stands on the Island, which is quite distinct from the Isle. The name is apparently derived from Ael-ig or Eel Island, and the first monastery, founded on this elevation of dry land in the midst of an immense area of marsh, was due to Æthelthryth, commonly known as Etheldreda, the wife of Ecgfrith, King of Northumbria. This was in 763, but a chronicle known as the *Liber Eliensis* states that at the very beginning of that century King Ethelbert of Kent founded a monastery at a place a mile to the south of Ely known as Cratendune, and that it was consecrated by St. Augustine. However this may be, there is little doubt that the island was crowned by a monastery in that century; the foundress became its first abbess and, as at the Abbey of Whitby, which had been founded by her aunt, St. Hilda, this religious house included both monks and nuns. Etheldreda was the daughter of the heroic King Anna of East Anglia. She was born at Exning, near Ely, in 630, and, when twenty-two years of age, married Tondbert, Ealdorman of East Anglia, from whom she inherited considerable wealth, for

he had died childless and left his extensive lands to his widow. It is said that her second marriage, with Ecgfrith, the young King of Northumbria, had been made against her resolution to found an abbey and live there as its abbess. After twelve years of unhappy married life, St. Wilfrid induced her to leave her husband. From Wilfrid she received the veil and, with the king following her, hurried away towards the inaccessible island in the Fens, which she had known from her childhood. Ecgfrith apparently failed to find his errant queen, and the monastery was duly established, the separate houses in which lived the monks and the nuns being ruled by Etheldreda, no abbot having been appointed. Some form of epidemic caused her death in 679, six years after she had realised her ideal life. Some of the sculptures in the existing cathedral record various events in her career, including the death scene, which appears on a corbel.

In the year 870, when the Danes were sweeping over East Anglia, Ely monastery was burnt and sacked; the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records the coming of this host in 866: "The same year came a large heathen army into England, and fixed their winter quarters in East Anglia, where they were soon horsed; and the inhabitants made peace with them." The Danish leaders were Ingwar and Hubba, whose savage followers do not appear to have hesitated in the killing of the occupants of all religious houses which they took. Ely, like so many other abbeys, whose riches tempted the predatory invader, was left a burnt-out ruin after an existence of nearly two centuries.

Not long after Alfred's astonishing victory at Ethandune, a college of priests was re-established at the ruined monastery. There were eight of them, and through their efforts part of the Romanesque church was rebuilt. In the reign of Edgar the place was re-organised as a convent of Benedictine monks, the secular clergy were dismissed, and in the year 907 new buildings were consecrated by Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury. In 993 another invasion of the Danes took place, when Æthelred the Redeless was king. East Anglia, then a part of united England, was defended by its ealdorman, whose name was Brithnoth. He met the Danes at Maldon, and forced them back upon the ships, but lost his life in the struggle, the Vikings carrying off his head. His body, however, was rescued and taken to Ely, where the monks replaced the head by a replica of wax. The remains now lie in Bishop West's chapel in the beautiful cathedral, and those who know the facts concerning his death and that thrilling poem, the *Song of Maldon*, in which the fight is recorded, will feel that the chapel is a link with a very stirring epoch in the annals of Saxon England.

Cnut came to Ely on various occasions, and one of his visits is the subject of an old ballad, which includes the lines:

Merrily sang they, the monks of Ely,
When Cnut the king he rowed thereby;
"Row to the shore, men," said the king,
"And let us hear these monks to sing."

A few years after the Norman Conquest Ely became the scene of the final resistance of a small

section of the English against William the Conqueror. This remnant of those who were unwilling to accept the domination of the new king, with his hordes of Frenchmen, to whom the fair lands of England were being parcelled out, resorted to Ely, which became a camp of refuge amidst its inaccessible marshes. The leader was Hereward the Wake, but he does not appear to have had the capacity of Alfred the Great for dealing with such a situation. Possibly the people of England were too much on the whole inclined to accept the new situation, for in a very short time the camp of refuge was little more than a beleaguered island, the Conqueror having made his headquarters at Cambridge. He, however, found himself up against a difficult task, in spite of the concentration of his whole army. The abbot, who, no doubt, saw inevitable surrender before long, agreed to capitulate on condition that William would allow the monastery to retain its lands, and Hereward's hand was, no doubt, forced.

Thus was the monastery spared the terror-inspiring wrath of William, and in 1083 there was begun, under Abbot Simeon, a new Norman church, much of which still stands in the cathedral of to-day. Building went on from that time until the end of the xivth century, and gradually there grew up on the little eminence above the marshes that amazingly beautiful pile which can be seen for many miles in every direction across the fertile green levels. In the early years of the xiiith century, during the time of Abbot Richard, the present nave was built, and the transepts

commenced by Abbot Simeon were completed soon afterwards. Disaster came in February 1322, when the Early Norman central tower fell with such a shock that everyone was convinced that an earthquake had taken place. It was late in the evening, when the monks were on their way to their dormitory, and thus no one was killed. Ominous cracks in the tower had been noticed, and their extent had been sufficiently threatening for the brethren to abandon for the time being the use of the church. Consequently, when the crash came no one was within reach of the falling masonry. By a fortunate chance the architect of the building at the time was the sacrist, Alan of Walsingham. He was a comparatively young man, at the age when ideas often come to men as inspirations to the greatest achievements. It is recorded how, during the night, he stood contemplating the appalling heap of ruin, and wondering what course he should take, when the great inspiration came upon him. Instead of building another tower of the ordinary square form, he would make a great octagon by cutting away the angles on all sides. Upon this he would erect a huge wooden lantern. This amazingly original idea was duly carried out, and twenty-seven years later the great conception was realised.

To provide the enormous timbers which were required was no light task, and at the time it was thought that it might be impossible to discover oaks large enough for the eight great posts which were to carry the structure above the line of the octagonal collar. That these stupendous difficulties

were eventually overcome reflects the greatest credit upon Alan of Walsingham, who, in 1341, became the prior of the monastery. In relation to the noble western tower the octagon is entirely in harmony, in spite of its being a work of such a much later date. It is indeed a curious fact that in some of the great Gothic cathedrals of England the unity of the whole pile is greater when the building has grown up throughout a period of some three or four centuries than in others which are more homogeneous in regard to style.

The town of Ely is, obviously, a mere collection of houses which has developed under the shadow of the great religious establishment. Without the cathedral who would go out of his way to visit the "Island"?

Littleport is on the Ouse, about five miles to the north. Its tall Perpendicular tower is a landmark for many miles across the Fens. A curious feature at its base is the indication of an opening which allowed foot-passengers to pass through it when the ordinary road was flooded.

The little town became conspicuous in 1816, when the general distress among the agricultural population was brought to a head here in the form of something which was more formidable than a riot. The locality was particularly irritated by the immense amount of enclosure of waste land and the rapid progress in the draining of the Fens, which was depriving the ill-paid peasant of his free source of fish and wild-fowl. A considerable number of peasants having come together at Littleport armed with a variety of guns and pistols,

as well as agricultural implements, they commenced to attack private houses and make forced levies. Later they proceeded to march upon Ely, headed by a cart in which four punt-guns were mounted. Their formidable appearance on reaching the quiet old cathedral city so terrorised the inhabitants that they gave in without resistance, and the armed crowd proceeded to plunder and riot.

When the news of the coming of soldiers reached the leaders, they decided to return to Littleport without delay, and on the arrival there of the troops the outbreak was quelled without bloodshed, most of the peasants deciding that discretion was the better part of valour. Of those who did not run away, five were condemned to death, and an equal number transported.

March. The small town of March has a modern aspect, having much outgrown its original dimensions, owing to its important position as a centre of five lines of railway. The church of Old March, dedicated to St. Wendreda, possesses a roof of the greatest magnificence, its double hammer-beams being adorned with a splendid array of angels with outspread wings, while in the corbels are figures carrying musical instruments. It is as fine a timber roof as one will find anywhere in the country, and those who wish to see a memorial to the man by whose generosity the roof exists should look for the brass to William Dredeman and Joan his wife, dated 1501-3.

Doddington. About four miles south of March is the village of Doddington, marking the southern

end of the former island of which March was the centre. The church at one time had the distinction of being the richest benefice in England.

Chatteris was spelt in a variety of ways in the earlier records; Camden spells it Cheaterizt, and in Domesday it appears as Ceteriz and Cateriz. The church at one time preserved in a chapel the bones of St. Etheldreda's chaplain, who was known as St. Huna. When this worthy's relics were removed from Chatteris to Thorney, they were placed in a shrine where, as one might expect, stories of remarkable cures brought many to the abbey.

Ramsey. Little is left of the famous abbey of Ramsey, founded there in 969. The church has entirely vanished, and the present house only incorporates a portion of the refectory. There is, in addition, however, a good deal of the gateway, which is a fine example of Perpendicular work. There are preserved in the present abbey house a number of early charters and documents connected with the monastery, and the figure of Duke Ailwin, the founder, probably saved from some portion of the church, is also preserved there. It was, no doubt, the ideal of all those who founded religious houses early in the Middle Ages to place them in more or less remote positions, and this may account for the fact that the islands in this portion of the Fen Country became possessed of no less than five important establishments—Ramsey, Ely, Peterborough, Crowland and Thorney. When Ailwin was on his death-bed he prophesied that relics of importance would be

discovered by the monks, and two years later occurred the incident of the ploughman's share laying bare at Slepe the burial-place of St. Ivo.¹ Having acquired these sacred bones, in addition to those of two Kentish princes who had been murdered in 664, Ramsey Abbey was adequately equipped to attract pilgrims to its various shrines—an essential matter if the income of the institution were to be adequately maintained.

In connection with the curiously erroneous beliefs which exist concerning the standard of morals obtaining in the monasteries during the earlier centuries of their establishment, it is interesting to read the following indictment from the pen of Lecky:

I can at present, however, only refer to the vast mass of evidence which has been collected on the subject, derived from the writings of the Catholic divines, and from the decrees of Catholic councils during the space of many centuries. It is a popular illusion which is specially common among writers who have little direct knowledge of the Middle Ages, that the atrocious immorality of the monasteries in the century before the Reformation was a new fact, and that the ages when the faith of man was undisturbed were ages of great moral purity. In fact, it appears from uniform testimony of the ecclesiastical writers that ecclesiastic immorality in the VIIIth and following centuries was little if at all less outrageous than in any other period, while the Papacy during almost the whole of the xth century was held by men of infamous lives.

There is small doubt that the energy devoted to

¹ See p. 122.



Photokrom Co.

ELY CATHEDRAL FROM THE SOUTH

Above the crossing appears the unique wooden octagon built by Alan of Walsingham after the fall of the central tower in 1322. It was not completed until 1342.

agriculture and drainage in the lands belonging to the various abbeys added greatly to the productiveness of these marshlands, hitherto of little use except for fishing and fowling.

The parish church of Ramsey is notable on account of its Transitional Norman work. The tower erected in 1672 was built of stone brought from the abbey ruins, and it is quite possible that it may represent something of the form of one of the monastery towers. The exceedingly fine detail of the sculpture, and also the design of the Norman work of the church, may be due to the fact that Herbert de Losinga, whose name will always be remembered as the builder of Norwich Cathedral, was at one time an abbot of Ramsey.

Wittlesea. This is an ancient and interesting little market town, obtaining its name from an English family known as the Whittlings. In the charming old market-place stands a picturesque market house, and the magnificent church has a very fine tower, with an ornate spire of the Perpendicular period. The Fen Country is noted for its church towers and spires, a fact probably due to their conspicuousness and their value as landmarks across the water-logged plains.

CHAPTER VIII

PETERBOROUGH AND CROWLAND

IN its earliest records Peterborough is known as Medehamsted, a name which was abandoned after the founding of the abbey dedicated to St. Peter. It was in the year 656 that land was provided by Peada, King of Mercia, in order that the monk Sexwulf might found a monastery. In 870, the same year as destruction fell upon Ely, the Danes slaughtered and burnt at Peterborough, and it was not until the reign of Edgar that the second monastery was brought into being. A disastrous fire in 1116 gave the monastery an opportunity to rebuild on a finer scale, and thus the third church was begun in 1117, no less than 120 years being consumed before its consecration took place on the 4th October, 1237. As a consequence, in this vast structure it is possible to study the development of architecture from the round-arched Romanesque work carried out early in the XIIth century to a remarkable western façade, unique in Gothic architecture, which belongs to the Early English period. As a dignified conception, entirely religious in feeling, perfect in its symmetry and magnificent in the great depth of its three noble archways, the west front of Peterborough has no serious rival. The only façade of



A. H. Robinson

THE SUPERB WEST FRONT OF PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL

The three deeply recessed arches have no rival save at Tewkesbury. In boldness of conception

any ecclesiastical structure in England which bears it any resemblance is the west front of Tewkesbury Abbey.¹ Curiously enough, there are no records of the reconstruction of the west end of the church; it is not even known precisely the year of its completion, and the designer of the three wonderful porches is not disclosed by any document. The remarkable wooden roof of the nave, still bearing its ancient painting, was the work of Abbot Benedict, who held office between 1177 and 1193, and the Lady Chapel dates from 1290. Its unusual position parallel with the choir resembles that of Ely.

The collapse of the central tower of that abbey church so alarmed the Chapter of Peterborough that it was decided, in order to avert a similar disaster, that they would take down their own Norman tower and erect a lower one in its place. On this account the silhouette of Peterborough Cathedral lacks something of the splendour it might have possessed had its marvellous west front been matched in some degree by the central tower rising from the crossing.

Tragic things happened in the cathedral during the Great Civil War, for Parliamentary soldiers destroyed monuments and brasses, and made bonfires of the monastery's records. One hardly likes to contemplate what additional light might have been thrown on obscure chapters of history had the wanton destruction of monastic libraries

¹ There is, in miniature, another west front, carrying out the idea of three arches deeply recessed. It is at Snettisham in Norfolk.

not taken place during this period and at the Dissolution.

In another chapter reference has been made (page 112) to Catherine of Aragon's imprisonment in this neighbourhood. When her death occurred at Kimbolton, her body was brought to Peterborough Cathedral for burial, and when, not many years later, Mary Queen of Scots was executed at Fotheringay, another funeral procession wended its way here. The remains of the Scottish queen were not, however, destined to remain at Peterborough, for when her son James I. was King of England, he arranged in 1612 for the translation of the coffin to Westminster Abbey, where it was placed in the tomb which one sees there to-day. It was a curious fact that, although separated by fifty-one years, both interments took place under the same sexton, one Robert Scarlett, a portrait of whom (not the original) is kept in the west transept. "Old Scarlett," as he was called, lived to ninety-eight years of age, and was, therefore, living during the reigns of the five Tudor monarchs.

The town has a picturesque stone market-house, built in 1671, and a few xviii-century domestic houses give a pleasant air to the streets near the cathedral.

About ten miles to the west of Peterborough is the charming little village of Fotheringay, to which those who feel sympathy for Mary Queen of Scots will wish to pay a pilgrimage. Of the castle which saw the last tragic scene of her life nothing remains to be seen except one shapeless mass of masonry, but the church which existed

when the Scottish queen was a prisoner there still stands with its fine tower crowned by an octagonal lantern. The aisles are buttressed and carry pinnacles, from which spring flying buttresses, supporting the clerestories. Although the building was never carried out to its completion,



FOTHERINGAY CHURCH

The castle in which Mary Queen of Scots was executed stood a little to the right.

it is a noble beginning, and lends much dignity to a village of such tragic memories.

The idea of founding a collegiate church at Fotheringay originated with Edmund (of Langley), Duke of York, one of the youngest sons of Edward III., who had been born at King's Langley in Hertfordshire. When he died, the only portion of his scheme which he had realised was the choir.

His son, Edward of York, made a certain amount of progress with his father's project, but he was killed on the field of Agincourt before the church or the buildings of the college were completed. It remained for Edward IV., his great-nephew, to complete the work, which must have been a singularly beautiful example of Perpendicular architecture. At the Dissolution, Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, was responsible for the destruction of the whole pile, save for the nave and the tower, which belonged to the parish and were, therefore, safe from the hand of the destroyer. The choir was already a ruin when Queen Elizabeth visited Fotheringay, to discover a scene which must have struck her with a sense of dismay, for the royal tombs had been desecrated and damaged to such an extent that she gave orders for the remains to be transferred, with what was left of their monuments, to the nave adjoining.

It was on the 14th October in the year 1586 that Mary Queen of Scots was arraigned for trial in the Hall of Fotheringay Castle. It has been said that her defence was throughout "a masterpiece of indomitable ingenuity, of delicate and steadfast courage, of womanly dignity and genius." Before the third day of the trial could begin, the Commissioners were informed that they were to adjourn to the Star Chamber, where they again met on the 25th instant. They then gave their verdict, Lord Zouch alone dissenting, by which Mary was found guilty of having, since the 1st June preceding, compassed and imagined divers matters tending to the destruction of Queen Elizabeth.

EXECUTION OF MARY STUART 139

The death sentence having been proclaimed throughout England, its welcome was demonstrated with bonfires and the ringing of bells. The condemned queen remained majestically tranquil when the news was announced to her. She expressed with dignity her willingness to die as a martyr for her religion, and stated her total ignorance of any conspiracy against the life of Queen Elizabeth. During a period of nearly three months between the knowledge that her fate was sealed and the day of her execution, she had to endure the suspense of the horrible fate awaiting her.

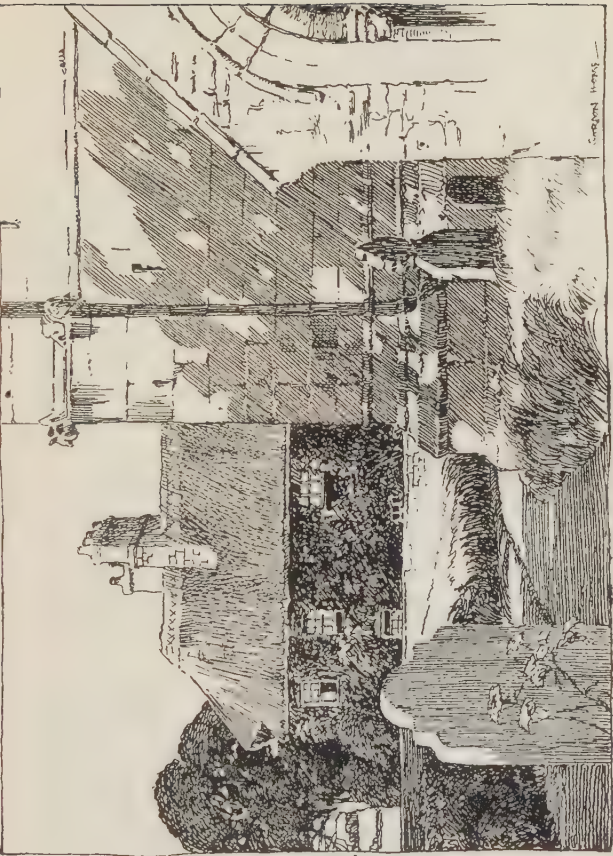
On the night before her execution, Mary took leave of her attendants with affectionate grace, presenting them with her jewels and money. It is said that she did not forget in these last moments a single friend or a single enemy, her logical outlook, coupled with a fierce spirit of loyalty, preventing her from forgiving a single injury as much as it made her mindful of every benefit.

On the morning of the 8th February, 1587, one year before the Spanish Armada was launched against the shores of England, Mary entered the hall of execution. She seated herself on the scaffold, heard with almost cheerful demeanour the reading of her death sentence, after which she declared her innocence with solemn face. Refusing the offered ministrations of the Dean of Peterborough, she recited her prayers in Latin, while he gave his in English. Finally she prayed for the prosperity of the Roman Catholic Church, and for the enemies she had commended the night before to the notice of the Spanish invader. The last moment had

arrived and, with unfaltering courage, she knelt to receive her death from the blow delivered with wavering hand by the headsman.

About four miles to the south of Fotheringay is the pleasant little town of Oundle. Its stone houses and numerous gables, and other features of the xviiith century, have been kept delightfully free from any of the crude intrusions which in recent years have spoiled the picturesqueness of many an old-world place. There are, indeed, few places where advertising has been kept more rigidly within its legitimate bounds. There is a beautiful church, a school of some importance, founded in 1544, and an hotel, "The Talbot," whose staircase is reputed to have come from Fotheringay Castle. Another four miles to the south, following the course of the Nene, is the picturesque village of Aldwinkle. It was here, in the old thatched rectory, opposite the church of All Saints, that John Dryden, the poet, was born in 1631. The poet's name, scratched on a pane of glass in one of the windows of the front of the house, is still preserved. His maternal grandfather, Henry Pickering, was rector of Aldwinkle All Saints between 1597 and 1637.

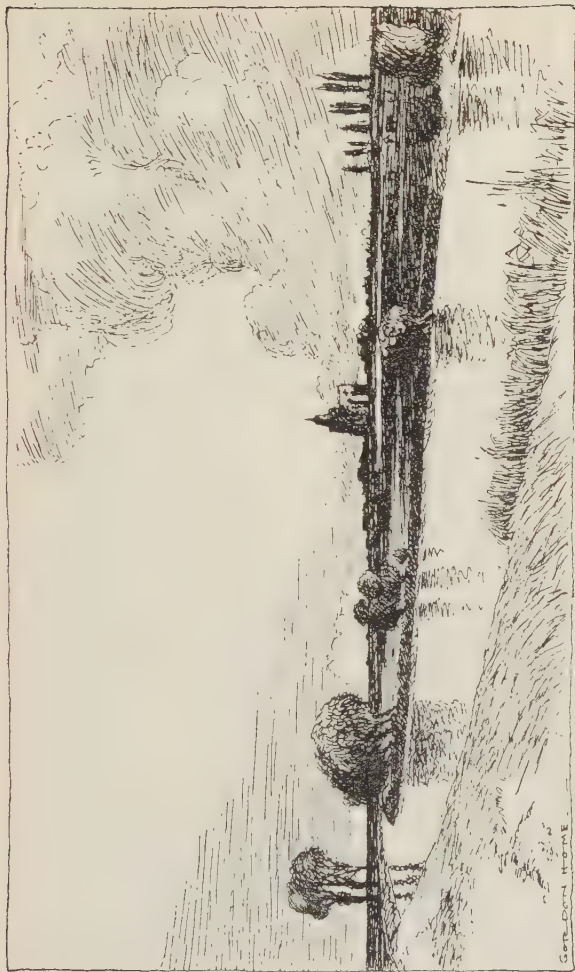
A little to the west of Peterborough, on the road to Wansford, is the village of Castor, which has given its name to the pottery made in great quantities in Romano-British times from the clay excavated along the bank of the river Nene. Precisely when these important potteries came into existence it is not easy to say, but that they received a tremendous stimulus after the



THE OLD RECTORY OF ALDWINKLE ALL SAINTS FROM THE CHURCHYARD
Here John Dryden, the poet, was born in 1631.

destruction of those on the Rhine, in Auvergne and elsewhere in Gaul, at the hands of the Alemanni in the IIIrd century, is undoubted. The style of pottery produced in this district of Northamptonshire was of a superior glazed quality of black or very dark grey ware. It was ornamented, not with a moulded design as in the Gaulish or "Samian" ware, but with a white clay applied to the surface by means of a brush or possibly of a tube through which the barbotine was pressed. In this way various flowing designs, consisting of curved lines, leaf-forms, rows of dots, and very frequently hunting scenes, were introduced in the form of a frieze round the centre of the vessels. The animals most frequently depicted are hares, different types of hound or dog and deer. They are drawn with excellent skill and reveal very clearly the form of art which came naturally to the Romanised people of Britain, in very marked distinction to the frozen classical forms and rigid ornament found on Samian ware. Castor was known during the period of the potteries as Durobrivæ, and was situated upon the Ermine Street, in the midst of a fairly extensive population.

St. James's Deeping. About four miles to the east of this station and visible for many miles across the fenland are the picturesque ruins of Crowland Abbey, one of the most famous of the monasteries of the Fen Country. It was founded as a Benedictine house early in the VIIIth century by Ethelbald, King of Mercia, in memory of St. Guthlac. To this extremely inaccessible spot about the year 700 came Guthlac, a member of

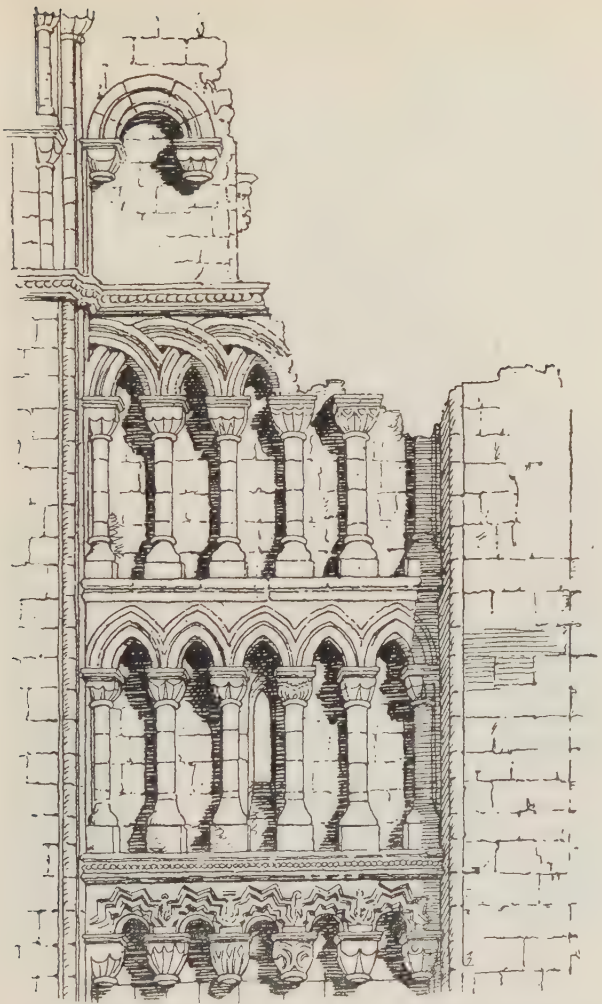


CROWLAND ABBEY FROM THE WEST

As it is seen on approaching from St. James's Deeping.

the royal house of Mercia, seeking a refuge from the turbulent world about him. The story goes that he set up his hermitage at the first dry land upon which his boat grounded as it drifted among the Fens. Some years after he had established himself here, Prince Ethelbald, fleeing from his bloodthirsty relative, King Coelred, took refuge with the holy man in his marsh-girt fastness. The story has it that Guthlac foretold that Ethelbald would surmount his difficulties and become King of Mercia, and this is what actually happened, for in 716 Ethelbald's violent relation fell dead at his board in the midst of a riotous feast, and thus made way for the fugitive prince. Although Guthlac had then been dead for two years, the new king did not forget the debt which he owed him, and founded, close to the cell where he had taken refuge, a monastery which was destined to become rich and powerful. The early buildings were destroyed by the Danes in 870 or 871, the year in which Medehamsted (afterwards Peterborough) and many other religious houses were burnt and sacked.

It is mentioned in one of the monastic records that Cnut made a present of a dozen skins of polar bears in order that the feet of the monks, as they stood at the altar, should not be too cold. This would have been in the restored or rebuilt church which was the successor of the first structure. It was just before the Conquest that a more permanent building was erected, but, whatever its nature, it did not survive long, having succumbed to fire in 1091. This Norman building was,

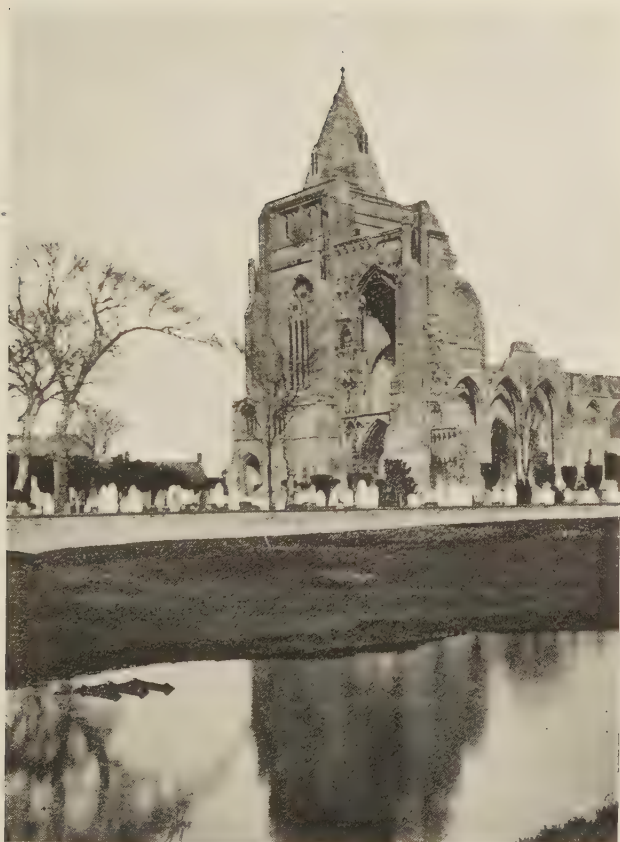


TRANSITIONAL NORMAN ARCADING ON THE WEST FRONT OF
THE CHURCH OF CROWLAND ABBEY

doubtless, that which was known to Abbot Ingulph, whose name is important as the writer of a chronicle of the abbey, brought down to his own times.

The new buildings erected after this fresh disaster included some very interesting work of the Transitional Norman period, an example of which is given in the illustration on page 145. The details of the western façade, which was repaired by Sir Gilbert Scott, show very interesting and ornate work of the Early English period with statuary in niches. The tower adjoining was built in 1427 by Abbot Upton, with a short spire of poor outline added in the xvth century. The chief portions of the nave still standing are Early English, and the north aisle, dating from 1405, is roofed, and remains in use as the parish church of the quaint village of Crowland, which clusters round the ruin. Much restoration has prevented the roofless portions of the church from further collapse.

Another feature of Crowland of exceptional interest is the bridge in the centre of the village. Unfortunately the waterways over which it was built have been diverted, and this unique structure is now high and dry. Having been placed at the meeting-place of three streams, it was designed to cross them all, an engineering feat which does not seem to have been attempted elsewhere. There was no intention of using the triple bridge for wheeled traffic, for its steepness made it only suitable for pedestrians. It appears to have been built late in the xivth century, and the very



Photochrom Co.

THE CHURCH OF CROWLAND ABBEY

Showing the beautiful Transitional Norman and Early English
details of the West Front.

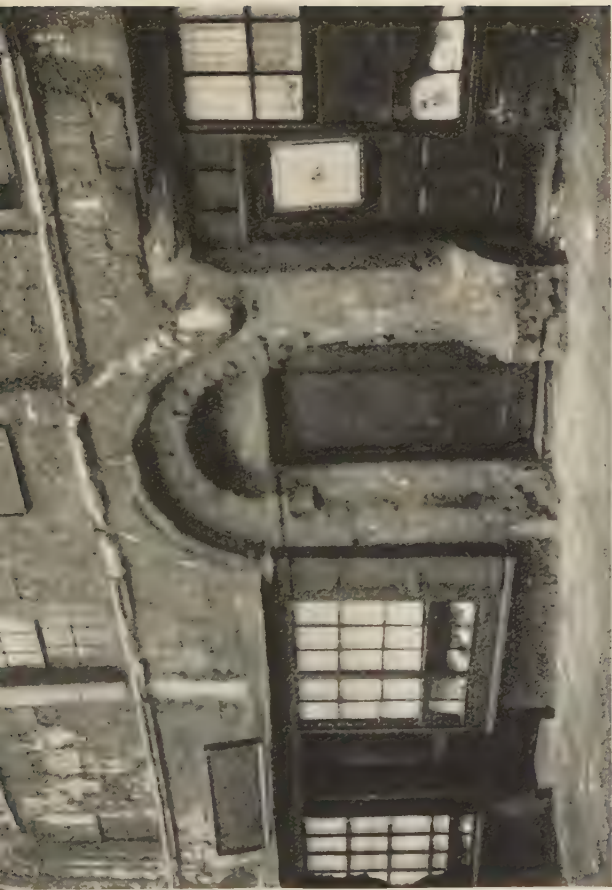
battered figure having something in one of its hands, still to be seen at the end of one of the parapets, was doubtless intended to represent King Ethelbald, the founder of the abbey, holding the kingly orb.

CHAPTER IX

IN HOLLAND AND KESTEVEN

THESE great areas of Lincolnshire comprise nearly a quarter of a million acres of fertile fens cut up by the complicated network of canals by which they were drained in the xviiith century. As a consequence the villages and towns are few and far apart, and church towers, owing to the yielding nature of the soil, are often much out of plumb. Because the land is level it need not be supposed that it is ugly; on the contrary there is a charm in the expansiveness of the landscapes which the natives sadly miss when they are obliged to live in a hilly country where the horizon is always close at hand and the sky is much limited. To the visitor, as a rule, it is the great cloudscapes and the vastness of the dome of heaven of the Fens which make the greatest appeal, for one is able to see the most astonishing groupings of shadow-filled cumulus clouds when the wind is bringing the great creamy-white masses across the deep azure of the zenith. In the district south-west of the Wash, known as Holland, the two chief towns are Spalding and Boston.

Spalding. In the centre of a network of roads and railways, this pleasant old town on the



THE NORMAN HOUSE OF "AARON THE JEW" AT LINCOLN

It is in the main street leading to the Cathedral, and is one of the very few examples of Norman domestic architecture surviving.



SPALDING CHURCH AND AYSCOUGHFEE HALL

Welland was until the Dissolution famous for its Priory, second in the county to Crowland Abbey in its wealth and importance. It was William the Conqueror's famous standard-bearer, Ivo Taillebois, who became the Norman lord of Spalding, and it was he who separated the priory, then a very modest house, from Crowland Abbey, of which it was a cell, and attached it to that of St. Nicholas of Angers. This began a prolonged series of disputes, which continued until 1332. A further struggle had to be waged with the alien house at Angers before independence was at last obtained, by means of a bull issued by the Pope at the end of the xivth century. When the Dissolution put an end to the activities of this wealthy house, the loss of its doles of food and charitable work among the indigent folk of the neighbourhood was acutely felt. It was owing to the cessation of this side of monastic life that the Poor Laws came on to the statute book in Elizabeth's reign, vagrancy having by that time become too serious to ignore. The site of the great monastery was near the present market-place, but to-day so little survives that only by careful enquiries can one trace a few parts of mediæval walls, now incorporated into domestic houses.

The picturesque and interesting church stands near the river bank, and adjoins the fine old house called Ayscoughfee Hall, illustrated here (p. 149). This mansion has externally a Georgian aspect, hiding a core which dates far back into the xvth century. It has now become a possession of Spalding, and the townsfolk are thus enabled to enjoy the



GORDON H. JAMES

A PICTURESQUE CORNER ON THE WELLAND AT COWBIT



EFFIGY OF SIR HUMPHREY
LITTLEBURY, *circa* 1400

His head rests on a tilting-helm with a remarkable crest.

picturesque gardens adorned with a remarkable display of topiary work.

There is, unfortunately, no space to deal adequately with the architecture of the beautiful church, whose tall crocketed spire, supported by corner turrets, from which spring flying buttresses, is such an ornament to the river-side. It was founded in the Decorated period, to which the chief parts of the structure belong. The lovely north porch with its fan-vaulted roof is a Perpendicular addition.

Cowbit. This is a very small village, with a Perpendicular church, and not far off a windmill, very attractively placed by a bend of the Welland. The area of water known as Cowbit Wash has for long been a well-known skating ground.

Holbeach. This old market town was the



THE RUINS OF WYKEHAM ABBEY NEAR SPALDING

birthplace in 1687 of William Stukeley, that pioneer among English antiquaries. He placed his country under a very great debt by his careful descriptions of ancient sites all over England, and his *Itinerarium Curiosum* is a mine of material for the modern antiquary—some of the places and objects



SCULPTURED ORNAMENT
OUTSIDE PINCHBECK
CHURCH

he described having been partially destroyed or wholly lost. Holbeach Church, whose walls lean in typical Fenland fashion, is of the same period as that of Spalding, and has a beautiful nave, as well as brasses, and a monumental effigy to Sir Humphery Littlebury, who died about 1400. His head is shown resting on a tilting-helm, which bears a crest in the form of a hooded head.

Pinchbeck, a little to the north of Spalding, has a very fine church, whose Perpendicular tower leans somewhat after the fashion of the campanile at Pisa. There is an Early English nave, and in the choir are interesting tombs with effigies.

Swineshead. The Cistercian abbey founded here by Robert de Greslei about 1134 is famous as the scene of the visit paid to it by King John after his disastrous march from King's Lynn across a corner of the Wash, since drained. It was while resting at the Abbey of Swineshead that news was



Photochrom Co.

THE NOBLE TOWER OF BOSTON CHURCH IN
LINCOLNSHIRE

It is one of the noblest Perpendicular towers in the world and
is a landmark at sea.

brought to the king that the baggage train, including his treasure and regalia, had been lost in the Wash, through the rapid incoming of the tide. Without the means to pay his troops and mercenaries John's hopes of success in his struggle with the barons were at an end. Whether the news of this catastrophe brought on an attack of acute dyspepsia, or whether the supper of ripe peaches and a newly fermented beverage were the cause



THE QUAIN T RIVER FRONT AT BOSTON

of his malady, is not known; nor is it possible to say whether the story of his having been poisoned by one of the monks of the abbey is true. Certain it is that he was soon afterwards conveyed to Newark Castle in a litter, and there the clever, but callous and entirely unprincipled king, breathed his last.

Boston. The name of this interesting old port on the Lincolnshire coast is a contraction of Botolph's Town, from the name of the first ruler of the monastery built there in 654 by the kindly

St. Botolph. In 870, that tragic year for the eastern abbeys, this little out-of-the-way religious house was wiped out by the Danes, and when re-established, it was named after the founder.¹ The town



A MISERERE IN BOSTON CHURCH

A fairly common subject, *i.e.*, a fox carrying off a goose.

being at the mouth of the River Witham possessed a very convenient port, by means of which it had developed a flourishing trade quite early in Norman times. It is a remarkable fact that in 1204 Boston paid the second largest amount for the tax on merchants' goods, London only paying £836 against Boston's £780. The foreign goods which were brought to the port attracted buyers from all over the Midlands, and the annual fair saw the town overcrowded with a vast influx of people. All sorts and conditions of the community crossed fen and wold on their way to the port in order to make their purchases of foreign wines and other delicacies, the buyers including representatives of the wealthy abbeys for many miles round.

In time Boston was included in the operations of the Hanseatic League, whose merchants from

¹ The previous name was Icanhoe.

the Baltic and other seaports lived in semi-fortified warehouses by the river. When, during a riot, one of these Easterlings, as they were called, was killed, the Hansa merchants abandoned the port, which was at that time (about 1470) beginning to decline on account of the difficulties to navigation caused by the gradual silting up of the harbour. Boston had seen its greatest days, and from this time its decay definitely set in.

The famous church of St. Botolph at Boston was begun in 1309, and its nave and chancel are of the Decorated period. The tower, which is the



A MISERERE IN BOSTON CHURCH

It shows the form of chastisement of school boys employed in the Middle Ages.

glory of the building and of the town, and, indeed, of the whole neighbourhood, was not constructed until the xvth century, in spite of the fact that the foundations had been most carefully laid a century or more earlier. Built in three lofty stages,

surmounted by a lantern, the great structure, some 290 feet in height, rears itself with almost startling impressiveness over the body of the church, and dwarfs all the surrounding buildings. It is still, as in the days when it was new, a conspicuous landmark at sea, and over a circle of thirty miles radius. It is suggested that the lantern was illuminated at night in order to act as a beacon for those making the port after dark, but this is not at all a matter of certainty. The founder's chapel was, in 1855-7, restored by a sum of money raised in the American Boston to the memory of John Cotton, who was at one time vicar, and was among the early settlers in Massachusetts. Cotton's grave is still preserved in King's Chapel Burying Ground in Boston, U.S.A.

It is not too well known that the Transatlantic settlement was not at once named after the Lincolnshire port. In June, 1630, it was called Trimountaine, but on 17th September in the same year an order was made that "Trimountaine shall be called Boston," and two years later it was selected as "the fittest place for public meetings of any place in the Bay [of Massachusetts]"; in other words, it became the capital of the colony. The little English town has now a daughter-city with a population of about three-quarters of a million. That the distinction conferred upon the decayed little port on the Lincolnshire coast was in no way connected with Cotton is clear, for he did not give up the living of St. Botolph's until 1633. The name was selected by way of a compliment to the early emigrants from Boston,



Photochrom Co.

GRANTHAM CHURCH

Famous for its magnificent tower and spire, 281 feet in height.

who included an ex-mayor, an ex-alderman, and Mr. Isaac Johnson, whose wife was a daughter of the Earl of Lincoln.

Among the Pilgrim Fathers who left Plymouth for America in 1620 were John Robinson and William Brewster, sturdy Nonconformists who had escaped from Boston to Amsterdam to obtain freedom from interference with their religious opinions. They sailed from Delftshaven in July, 1620, and the *Mayflower*, after calling at Plymouth, set forth on her famous voyage on 5th August.

Spilsby. Some half a dozen miles to the north-west from the terminal station at Spilsby is the village of Somersby, where, in the old rectory, Lord Tennyson, the Poet Laureate, was born in 1809. Originally the house was a mere cottage, but Dr. Tennyson, the father of the poet, added to it extensively, so that it now has a curiously picturesque appearance, with a large dining-room lighted by pseudo-Gothic windows.

Grantham. If the designers had been more successful with the buttresses and turrets, the soaring tower and spire of Grantham Church would be almost without a rival in the whole island. As it stands, its great height (about 280 feet) and the perfection of the crocketed spire almost place it in the front rank of English steeples, but those of Louth and Boston, to mention two of its neighbours, are so much more beautiful that Grantham is obliged to concede to them the highest honours. There are days when a slight mistiness gives to the lowest stage of the tower a certain unreality, resulting in the curious illusion that the great

steeple is floating over the roofs of the town. It is on these occasions that distant views of the church are at their best, for the commercial enterprise of the place has caused a sea of brilliant red brick and blue slate to flow across the town, submerging the sober tones of the older buildings, the majority of which have been rebuilt in recent years.

Apart from its famous tower, the church is a notable example of the Early English and Decorated periods, having windows whose tracery is exceptionally full of beauty. A crypt with two parallel vaults of the Decorated style is under the east end of the south aisle.

In the High Street there still stands "The Angel" Inn, which claims to be the oldest hotel in England. To what extent this pretension would be supported by a strict enquiry I do not know, but I incline to believe that if Canterbury, York, and certain ancient towns in the West were to delve deeply enough into their archives, "The Angel" might be found to have close rivals. However that may be, the archway belongs to the reign of Edward III. (1327-1377), and bears sculptured heads of that monarch and his queen, Philippa of Hainaut, and the main portion of the inn belongs to the middle of the xvth century, and is therefore the structure which was standing on the great thoroughfare to the north when, in the autumn of 1483, the last bloody episodes of the Wars of the Roses were being enacted. On 19th October, Richard III., having quelled the insurrection raised by the Duke of Buckingham, soon after the murder of his nephews, was at Grantham, and there, in "The



SOMERSBY RECTORY, THE BIRTHPLACE OF LORD TENNYSON

Angel," signed the death-warrant of the chief conspirator, who was duly executed at Salisbury.

Bourne as the name of a small Lincolnshire market-town probably stirred the imagination of very few until Charles Kingsley's romance *Hereward the Wake* crystallised the fables and legends which associated the English hero with the place which claims to be Hereward's birthplace. Undoubtedly the sound of the name Bourne does now awaken the imagination like a distant bugle-call echoing down the ages and instantly recreating the England of the early days of the Norman Conquest. For this we owe a debt to the rector of Eversley, and while none need shirk the fact that Kingsley seized upon myth and legend as the framework upon which to build up his romantic novel, all can feel the atmosphere of mediæval England in the xith century so skilfully created by the Victorian novelist. The stronghold of Bourne, which has without any historical basis been associated with Hereward the Wake, exists to-day as little more than a mound and encircling earthworks. The site is close to the station and a Tudor house, which long ago was a seat of the Digbys.

The church of Bourne is a fragment—a very solemn and majestic one—of the Augustinian monastery founded in 1138. The Late Norman nave of the church was secured for parochial purposes when the Dissolution terminated claustral life at Bourne, and it thus happens that the townsfolk now possess a parish church of the greatest dignity, the fine Norman arcades having been

preserved throughout the eight centuries since the founding of the monastery.

Sleaford. The origin of this old market-town may go back to very early times, for many Roman coins of the period of Constantine (306-337) have been discovered there. Later the site appears to have been occupied by the English or Anglo-Saxon invaders, for an extensive cemetery of that period has been excavated there. When the light of history falls on Sleaford it emerges as a manor owned by the Bishops of Lindsey—afterwards of Lincoln. How soon the first fortress was built at Sleaford is likely to remain a subject for conjecture, but in the middle of the Norman period that believer in strong walls—Bishop Alexander—built a castle which would have been that which John visited during the last few weeks of his life. At the Dissolution period both manor and castle were allowed to fall into the hands of the Protector Somerset, and now little remains besides a portion of a tower.

In the splendid church is a highly interesting collection of monuments with effigies to the Carr family which attained wealth by trade.

CHAPTER X

LINCOLN AND THE LOWER TRENT

Lincoln, as a city, is one of the oldest in Great Britain. A town of some kind may have existed on the site long before the Roman eagles came to the shores of Britain, but the first certain evidence of it as a place of importance is towards the end of the 1st century of the Christian era. It was created a colony by the Emperor Nerva, and was thenceforth known officially as *Lindum Colonia*, probably pronounced *Lin-coln'ia* in the rough camp Latin of the retired soldiers, who were its first Roman citizens. Lincoln remains to this day. There is no evidence that it was ever destroyed; in any case, it has preserved its Roman name with only the slightest variation—a phenomenon which cannot easily be explained away.

The town, no doubt, declined very much in size and prosperity during the Dark Ages—but it survived, and when it emerges once more into the clear light of history it is a place of importance, surrounded by Roman walls. It was to Lincoln that in 1074 Bishop Rémi (Remigius) de Fécamp translated the seat of the bishopric of Lindsey from Sidnaceaster (Stow), and there he laid the foundations of the church which later grew into one of the largest and stateliest cathedrals in England.

Lincoln has been the scene of two battles. Both were mere skirmishes from the modern standard. The first was in 1141, when the usurping King Stephen was completely defeated and captured by the adherents of the Empress Maud. The second occurred in 1217, and was an event of decisive importance in English history. A force of French and revolted English barons was entirely defeated and all but exterminated by the Loyalist forces under William the Marshal, William Longespée, Earl of Salisbury, Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, and John's mercenary general, Fawkes de Breauté. It was the centre of much vigorous campaigning in the Great Civil War, but no fighting actually occurred at the city itself. To-day it is a fairly large and flourishing place, with many of the characteristics of a city, and many interesting remains of its Roman and English past, all dominated by the magnificent bulk of the cathedral, crowned by its three towers.

Bishop Rémi's cathedral was, of course, built in the prevailing Norman Romanesque style. He did not live to complete it. This was effected by his successor, Robert Bloët, one of Henry I.'s ecclesiastical ministers, who died suddenly in 1123 while riding with his king—as is dramatically related in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Bishop Alexander, who succeeded Bloët, vaulted the nave. The Norman cathedral was wrecked by an earthquake, and its rebuilding was the first task to be undertaken by the renowned Bishop Hugh de Grenoble, usually called St. Hugh of Lincoln. Like all mediæval builders he began at the east



Photochrom Co.

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL FROM THE WEST

Masking the base of the Norman towers is the remarkable Early English screen added in the Early English period.

end, and rebuilt in Early English style the existing choir and most of the two southern transepts. William of Blois (1203-6), Hugh de Wells (1209-1235) and the famous Robert Grosseteste



LINCOLN CATHEDRAL FROM THE NORTH

(1235-1253) continued the work, and the bulk of the edifice, including the Presbytery or Angel Choir, was completed by about 1280. The Norman façade, with its two massive towers, had survived the earthquake, but it was sheathed in a great Early English screen, with tall and massive flanking

turrets crowned by conical spires. The aspect of the western front is consequently very strange and incongruous—a very fine and sternly graceful Romanesque façade enveloped in Early English Gothic architecture.

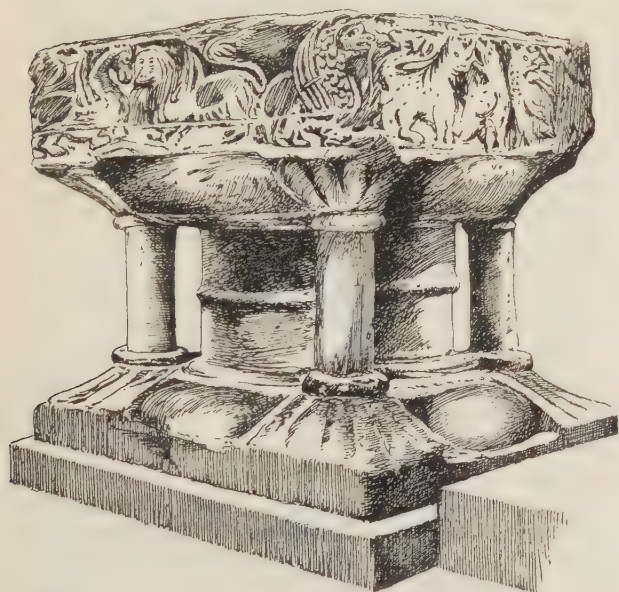
The upper stages of the great central tower were added by Bishop Oliver de Sutton (1280–1300). Thomas Bec (1342–1347) completed the great transepts, and finally, about 1450 the Norman western towers were raised to their present height by the addition of the Perpendicular upper stages. The chapter-house seems to be of slightly later date than the choir, and the cloisters were the work of Bishop de Sutton.

In the main, therefore, Lincoln Cathedral is an Early English building. Externally it is extremely grand and imposing, far more so than Westminster, and it is quite as splendid as Salisbury, both of which, roughly, are contemporary. If it lack the soaring spire of its southern rival, its central tower is among the finest in England.

Of its interior features the nave is very fine and pure Early English: the arches are of richer outline than those of Salisbury. The choir proper resembles the nave, but its eastward extension—the “Angel Choir”—surpasses in beauty every part of the cathedral. It is Early English on the threshold of Decorated, and the general effect is one of remarkable and almost overwhelming richness of ornamentation.

The cathedral, for many visitors, absorbs all the interest of Lincoln; but there are many mediæval fragments which deserve notice—especially the XIIIth-century building known as the

House of Aaron the Jew. Noteworthy, too, is the bridge, still crowned with houses as it was when St. Hugh celebrated mass in St. Mary's Cathedral.



GORDON
HOMER

THE ROMANESQUE FONT IN LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

Of even greater interest to the archæologist are the remains of the Roman fortifications. Their notable feature is the Newport or North Gate, still showing the main roadway arch, flanked by a

smaller one for foot passengers, both openings now half buried by the progressive rise in the level of the road. The Roman ramparts are plainly discernible at several points, especially on the west side; and their destruction or masking with mean houses, which not long ago was imminent, has happily been averted.

Stow, now a mere village about eight miles north-west of Lincoln, is interesting as having been the seat of the diocese of Lindsey before Rémi removed it to the Roman walled city. Its imposing parish church of St. Mary unquestionably occupies the site of the ancient cathedral, probably founded at the beginning of the viiith century—perhaps by Æthelred I., King of Mercia. This earliest church was burnt in the Viking devastations of the ixth century, and seems to have remained a ruin until 1040, when a new building was reared by Eadnoth, Bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames. Some remnants of this church may survive in the existing nave, though the general style appears to confirm the statement that Bishop Rémi of Lincoln rebuilt it. At the same time this Norman work is very early and plain, and it is quite possible that the nave really dates from Eadnoth's episcopate. The choir is rich Late Norman, probably the work of Bishop Alexander. Some of the windows are Early English and Perpendicular, inserted into the thick Romanesque walls. The central tower is Perpendicular. The octagonal font is Norman, supported on eight circular shafts.

Gainsborough, always a place of local importance, has of late years grown considerably owing to the



Gainsborough House

A PICTURESQUE REACH OF THE TRENT ABOVE GAINSBOROUGH

establishment of ironfoundries. Its name shows that it was the principal settlement of the Gainas, who, in the VIIIth century, formed an ealdormanry of Mercia, and it is interesting to learn that Ealhswith, the wife of Alfred the Great, was the daughter of one of these ealdormen. In 1014 Sweyn "Forkbeard," the fierce piratical Danish king who conquered Æthelred "the Redeless," died here.

After this nothing of special importance occurred at Gainsborough for six centuries and more, but in the Great Civil War its possession was hotly contested by Royalists and Parliamentarians. It was at Sand Hill, a mile to the south, that in 1643 Oliver Cromwell gained his first really important cavalry success over a greatly superior force of Royalists, and then, finding himself confronted by the whole of Lord Newcastle's army, made a retreat which did him and his troopers much greater honour than their gallant conduct in the fight itself.

For some centuries the lords of the manor were the great de Burghs, of whom a fine memorial remains in the Old Hall or Manor House. It was built about 1490-1500, and greatly enlarged some eighty years afterwards. The great hall is an imposing half-timbered structure, with a fine open roof. The kitchen has two huge fireplaces, and the brackets of the roasting-jacks remain as when immense joints of meat were prepared for such feastings as attended Henry VIII.'s visit in 1541.

The parish church of All Saints was rebuilt in the pseudo-classical style in 1745, but retains its Late Perpendicular tower, probably built by

the first Baron de Burgh. The outline of the earlier edifice may still be traced. In this space is the table-tomb of one of the de Burghs, probably of Sir Thomas, who died in 1487. Gainsborough is the "St. Ogg's" of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*.

A natural phenomenon to be witnessed at Gainsborough will probably attract many for whom ancient buildings and historical events have slight interest. This is the "eagre" or tidal bore which twice a day rushes up the Trent. At the equinoxes and under exceptional conditions it is very formidable, its eight or nine successive billows pursuing one another up the river with a roaring sound, terrifying to anyone in a small boat. The incident described by George Eliot when Maggie Tulliver is caught by the eagre when in a boat with Tom is told with full local knowledge.

Scrooby. At a point where Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire meet, about ten miles east of Gainsborough, is Scrooby Old Manor House, a building of the deepest interest in connection with the Pilgrim Fathers. The house was owned by William Brewster, a gentleman of good education, who farmed land held by the Archbishop of York. He became the central figure of the movement which resulted in the escape to Holland of a group of families whose lives were being made burdensome through the repressive action of James I. and his Government on all who would not conform to the Established Church of England. The severities towards Dissenters may be judged from the King's words: "If a man will not be quiet and show his obedience, the Church were better without him, and he were worthy to be

hanged." So hearty was Archbishop Whitgift's approval of this statement that he thought it bore the impress of the "inspiration of the Holy Spirit."

It is an interesting fact that in the dozen years of their residence at Leyden, these Englishmen whom the Scottish king thought worthy to be hanged, never had, in the words of one of the city magistrates, "any suit or accusation come against any of them."



SCROOBY OLD MANOR HOUSE

It was the home of William Brewster, the central figure of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Brewster made his house a meeting-place for the Dissenters of the district, and it thus became another Jordans.

Newark - upon - Trent, once a place of great importance, is now only a small town, but has many historic associations, and retains important relics of its ancient prominence. It has a spacious and picturesque market-place, still possessing old-world buildings, and above the roof rises the imposing spire of the parish church of St. Mary Magdalene, a building which contains architecture

of every period from Norman to Perpendicular. The beautiful spire is lower than that of Grantham Church, but it rivals, if it does not surpass, it in grace. In the interior is the xivth-century brass of Alan le Fleming, accounted one of the finest of its type in existence.

Some of the inns in the town have interest—especially the “White Hart” and the “Saracen’s Head.” It was at the latter hostelry, readers of Scott will remember, that Jeanie Deans slept on her pilgrimage to London to save the life of her sister. Her walking record was five-and-twenty miles a day, with a few extra miles if necessary—in bare feet!

Newark Castle, now a mere shell, showing, however, an imposing front to the Trent, which washes the base of its western face, was built principally in the xiiith century, and enlarged at various subsequent periods. Within its walls King John ended his evil life in 1216.¹ During the Great Civil War it was the core of a large Royalist entrenched camp, which was a veritable snag in the way of the Parliamentary forces. It was besieged again and again, but not captured until 1646, when it surrendered to old Alexander, Lord Leslie and his Scots. It was to them that Charles I. gave himself up, in the hope of being able to cajole his own countrymen into granting better terms than his English enemies were disposed to concede—a hope which was not fulfilled, for the Scots handed him over to the Long Parliament in return for their arrears of pay.

¹ See p. 155.

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